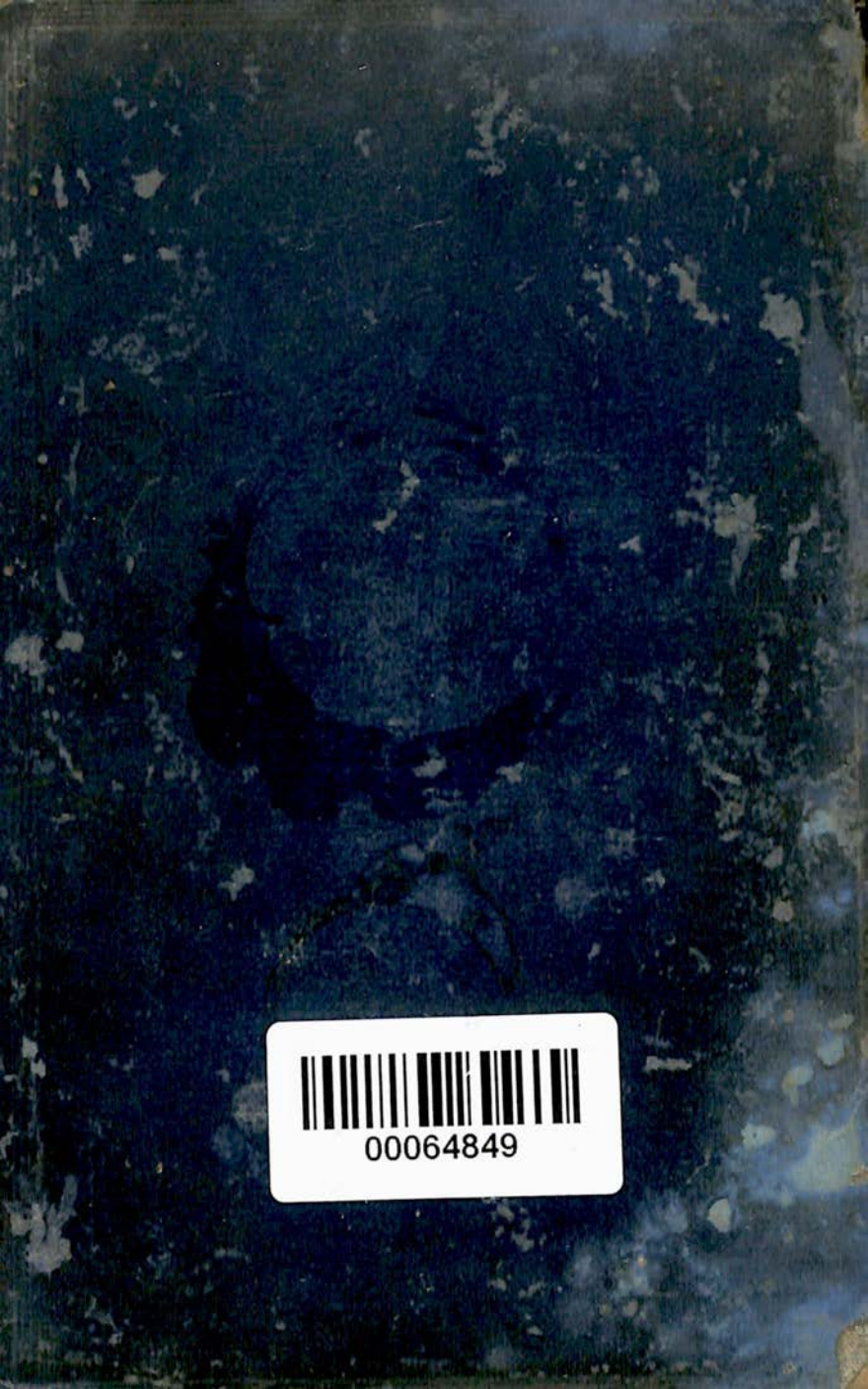
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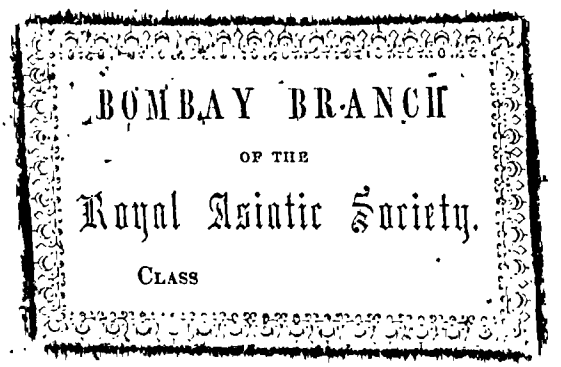

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ESSAYS, REVIEWS AND ADDRESSES.

ESSAYS, REVIEWS,

AND

ADDRESSES.

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BY

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SELECTED AND REVISED BY THE AUTHOR.

IV.

ACADEMICAL: RELIGIOUS.

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PREFACE.

THE ruling purpose of the first half of this volume, as of some preceding papers, is to retain Theology in its place as an organon of cognizable truth, and protest against its exclusion from the competence of Reason, and surrender to the keeping of Imagination and Emotion. That both Science,—as with Comte,—and Metaphysic,—as with Kant,—should have been provoked, by the pretensions of ontologists, to declare the Intellect helpless for the apprehension of more than phenomena, is not surprising. Some estimates of their reasons will be found in the earlier volumes. It is the paradox of the present age, that the same doctrine of nescience is propounded by Literary interpreters of the Prophets and intending 'defenders of the Faith'; who insist on the disabilities of the Intellect for the discovery of anything Divine, and tell the "Seekers after God" that they will go astray unless they quit the tracks of rational thought. A Being thus unverifiable by our intelligence, of whom we can neither affirm nor deny any predicates, who is therefore outside the category of True or False, becomes a mere Phantom of ideality, whom it would be mania to trust and love. 'But is there not,' we are asked, 'warrant in the Scripture pieties for owning that the Almighty is inscrutable, and 'His ways past finding out?' Yes: but see the difference: you mean and say, 'Whether *there be* a God, we can never know; it is beyond our truth-finding faculty?' The Psalmist *goes to Him* and exclaims, 'O Thou Unsearchable, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain! if what

Thou hast shown me of Thyself is so adorable, how must the Infinitude beyond transcend the compass of my thought!' The agnosticism of doubt is as far from the agnosticism of devotion as blindness for want of Vision from blindness through excess of Light.

Religion, thus discharged from its hold on reality and reduced to the category of Symbol, is dislodged from its seat as the supporting postulate of all the Sciences, and takes its place among the Fine Arts; to be treated, by writers on the Belles Lettres, among the varieties of rhetorical trope and metaphor and personification, the literal base of which is always found in some *abstraction* mentally distilled from concrete experience. Hence it is that philosophers and critics who touch upon the subject spend a curious ingenuity in substituting neuter abstracts for the ancient personal names of "the Living God." To them, the *thing* denoted is 'The Infinite,' 'The Eternal,' 'The Unknowable,' 'The stream of Tendency,' 'The aggregate of *Unchangeable Law*'; and no longer the 'Creator and Inspirer' of men, the Father in heaven,' the 'Judge of all the earth,' the 'Holy One,' the 'Searcher of hearts.' To me, I confess, Religion,—in its very essence,—is a conscious relation between the human Personality and the Divine: and had I, from change of conviction, to relinquish this relation as imaginary, I should feel bound to surrender the vocabulary of religion to those who retained this essence, and to make the best I could of the unsanctified Ethics that remained. Respect for the veracities of language would forbid me, by misuse of terms, to wear as a mask a cast of features no longer rendering the expression of my own. The criticisms which are applied to others in one or two of the following Addresses I should feel that I had justly brought upon myself, if to the dwarfed and altered thought I had tried to shrink the grand old language.

Thankfully, however, do I take leave of all contentious criticism in the middle of this volume, and pass from

religion in its intellectual approaches to religion in its personal life and applications. The Sermon, written not to be read in the library, but to be spoken in the house of Prayer, addressed therefore, not to the fastidious student, but to like-minded hearers of quick-responding heart, spontaneously unlocks the spiritual contents of a faith, and directs them upon the conscience ready to be struck and the affections waiting to be kindled. And as, in the course of years, it alights upon one after another of the varying exigencies and sorrows of humanity, it tries the resources at its disposal from many sides, and finds what sacred guidance there may be for every emergency and every opportunity, private or public. The preaching around which the same listeners permanently gather, and the prayers which truly breathe their wants and aspirations, will ever be a better test of their religion as it is really is, than the formulas of catechism and creed. In this sense, the second part of this volume may perhaps preserve some traces, absent from the first, of the changing modes of feeling characteristic of its time.

THE POLCHAR, AVIEMORE.
August 11, 1891.

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COLLEGE ADDRESSES.

I.

SCOPE OF MENTAL AND MORAL PHILOSOPHY.*

THE traditionary notices of ancient civilization, both in India and in Greece, prove that the earliest curiosity of human reason directs itself, not to the acquisition of the detailed and concrete knowledge most within reach of its infant power, but to the determination of vast questions, lying altogether beyond the region of experience, and unapproachable except by the most practised faculties of thought. In his first meditations, man appears to have conceived of the outward universe and of himself, not as subjects of analysis, but as two related wholes, and to have aspired boldly and at once to ascertain their mutual position. The dim consciousness that his nature is a meeting-point of Free-will and Necessity,—a power in itself, environed by more tremendous powers;—the feeling that with his animal or sentient life was united a diviner principle of thought;—the spectacle of mechanical order in the material phenomena of nature, and of moral order in the societies of men, stimulated his spirit of speculation, and set before him the great problems of life,—its origin, its mystery, its destination. Wondering guesses, suggested by physical analogies, at the contents of distant space and the events of a past eternity; methods of illustration, proposing to derive spirit from matter, and the harmony of nature from the abstract

* Inaugural. Opening of Manchester New College at Manchester, October, 1840.

relations of number and form; a reverential confusion between the human and the divine; with a profound sentiment of the sacredness of law and polity,—were the first results of the contemplative exercise of reason.

From this chaotic mass of thought, physical science slowly disengaged itself in something like a distinct shape; but with much more rapidity and clearness intellectual science was evolved. The prevailing ingredients, indeed, in all primitive philosophy are furnished by humanity, rather than by the surrounding creation; and its first earnest efforts are an obscure and groping advance towards a science of human nature. Nor can we wonder that, to the Greeks at least, man appeared pre-eminently the most worthy object to engage their meditations; for never, perhaps, was human nature exhibited in so glorious a form, combining so much physical beauty with vividness of perception and versatility of mental power, as in Greece. Fair as was the climate of that land, man was yet the spectacle most admirable there; and for the same reason that Eve, when gazing on the lake of Eden, saw nothing but her own loveliness, though all Paradise was reflected from its bosom, did the human mind in Greece, when bending over the depths of philosophy, feel its eye arrested by the incomparable image of itself.

In the youthful mind of individuals, as of nations, the same origin of the philosophical tendency may be traced. A deep curiosity respecting the great problem of Free-will is usually, I believe, the first symptom of speculative activity of intellect; a confident solution of it, the first triumphant enterprise; a relapse into the consciousness of its mystery, the first sign of a more comprehensive wisdom. Sir James Mackintosh, describing the impression produced upon him at the age of fourteen, by Bishop Burnet's commentary on the 17th article of the English church,—that which regards predestination,—remarks, that "Theological controversy has been the general inducement of individuals and nations to engage in metaphysical speculation."* And it is easy to

* "Life of Mackintosh," vol. i. p. 4.

discover what were the particular questions in theology which in Mackintosh's own case, excited the disposition to metaphysical inquiry, when we learn that his constant antagonist in argument, though brother in affection, was Robert Hall ; and that the positions which they discussed together, night after night, and month after month, were furnished by Butler's Analogy, and Edwards on the Will.* It is probable, that, in the secret history of every noble and inquisitive mind, there is a passage darkened by the awful shadow of this conception of Necessity ; and it is certain, that, in the open conflict of debate, there is no question which has so long served to train and sharpen the weapons of dialectic skill. If it be true, as Dugald Stewart affirms, that one who has never doubted the existence of matter, may be assured that he has little capacity for purely metaphysical investigation ; it is no less certain, that he who has never been troubled by alarms for his free-will, can have little aptitude for research, either speculative or moral.

These higher problems of life, however, though, from their connection with our affections and our faith, they may be the natural incentives, cannot be made the scientific commencement, to a systematic philosophy of man. They are not to be mastered by the rude and undisciplined earnestness of a reason ignorant as yet of its own resources, of the worth of its own methods, and the legitimate range of its own powers. Experience, spreading out before us the ontological discussions of the school-men,—monuments of wasted labour and futile ingenuity,—warns us that if the profounder perplexities of speculative reason are ever to be resolved, it can only be by men thoroughly acquainted with the facts and laws of their own intellectual and moral being ; and that to expect any triumph of science over the spiritual mysteries of nature by self-poised reasonings, having no origin in psychological analysis and induction, is as absurd as to look to the fancies of cosmogonists for a discovery of the structure and dynamics of the heavens.

* "Life of Mackintosh," p. 14. Note.

That the vital root of all philosophy lies in self-knowledge is a truth which Socrates was the first to expound:—a truth suggested, indeed, by the inscription on the Delphic temple —"Know thyself," but, as conceived by him, imparting to the words so new and profound a significance, as to justify the oracle in pronouncing the interpreter the wisest of men. "For a man to be unacquainted with himself, and in matters in which he is ignorant to conjecture, and then mistake his conjectures for information, Socrates," we are assured by one of his disciples, "conceived to be only one remove from madness;"* nor will any one think this condemnation too severe, who calls to mind the dreary controversies of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries,—battles always of words, rarely of thoughts, sometimes of fists and clubs,—in which "angelic" or "irrefragable doctors" engaged the cathedral schools and universities of Europe, respecting qualities and quiddities, entities and hæcceities, chimeras *in vacuo*, and angels on a needle's point. Wonderful avidity of intellectual appetite, that could continue to relish even this spurious fruit of the tree of knowledge, turned thus into dry ashes to the taste! It is singular that the disciples of Aristotle should thus deplorably exemplify the violation of the precepts of Socrates; and that, in passionate admiration of the pupil, they should fall so directly under the rebuke of the master's oracle and instructor. The frivolous subtleties of the scholastic age would never have exposed philosophy to contempt, if the rule of the Athenian sage had been comprehended and applied,—if it had been remembered that the mind is the instrument by which all reasonings and judgments are performed, and that, till its capacities are investigated and determined, no quest after truth can be well-ordered. Who will venture to say how many vain disputes have arisen from confounding abstract ideas with objective realities; in other words, from mistaking that which is in the mind, for something out of it? Nor can this error safely be despised as

* Xen. Mem. III. ix. 6.

the obsolete folly of an unenlightened age,—a remnant of Platonism which, at least since Bishop Berkeley's time, may be regarded as a mere historical curiosity. It is the belief of some of the most profound thinkers of our own day, that this very error, monstrous as it appears when we look back upon it in the schoolmen, is habitually committed still: and within the last few weeks an English Philosopher, whom it would be ridiculous to describe as a visionary, has published a work* upon the principles of physical science, founded on the doctrine, long universal in Germany, that space and time have no absolute existence external to the mind, but are internal forms of thought; mere relative conditions which our constitution imposes upon all our conceptions. More self-knowledge, it would appear, is yet required, if we are still unable to draw the line between the contents of our nature, and the foreign domain of the universe beyond.

To trace the boundary, really separating the nature within from nature without, is one office of mental philosophy, —which is, indeed, but another name for the Socratic self-knowledge. Without special introspection, every one has a vague and confused knowledge of the processes of his own mind, and of certain differences which prevail among them: the images of his dreams, and the experiences of his waking hours,—the impressions of sense, and the ideas of memory,—the operations of judgment, and the emotion of grief,—the assent to a mathematical proposition, and the conviction of an empirical or moral truth,—are separated from each other by such plain distinctions, that the common feeling and common language of mankind cannot fail to keep them apart. These distinctions are like the broad and ineffaceable characteristics which, to the mere natural eye, distribute the material creation at once into various provinces;—locally, into heavens and earth; palpably, into solid, liquid, and air; structurally into mineral, vegetable, and animal. But he who stops here, has only the

* Professor Whewell's "Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences."

most obscure and indistinct mental picture of the system of which he forms a part: the series of physiological relations, which, commencing on the confines of the inanimate world, range all organized beings along an ascending scale of natural types; the chemical laws which determine the state of all the materials of the globe, and make their massive or fluid conditions interchangeable; the celestial architecture and mechanics, which, with wonderful precision, refer to its place at every moment each member of the vast group of visible worlds, and exhibit to us in plan and section the fair vestibule of infinity amid which we stand;—all this remains hidden from the mere surface-view of the common observer, and reveals itself only to the disciplined eye of science, which, by analytic insight directed upon the parts, has gained the point of synthetic survey that commands the whole.

The difference between the ordinary visual gaze upon the external universe, and the interpreting glance of science, is felt by every cultivated understanding to be immeasurable;—and the contrast is not less between that dull sense of what passes within him, which is forced upon a man by mere practical experience, and the exact consciousness, the discriminative perception, the easy comprehension of his own (and, so far as they are expressed by faithful symbols, of others') states and affections, possessed by the patient analyst of thought and emotion, and careful collector of their laws. The mighty mass of human achievement and human failure, in intellectual research, in moral endeavour, in social economy and government, lapses into order before him, and distributes itself among the provinces of determinate law. The structure of a child's perplexity, and the fallacies of the most ambitious hypothesis, lie open to him as readily, as to the artizan a flaw in the fabric of his own craft. The creations of art fall before him into their elements; and, dissolving away their constituent *matter*, which is an accident of their age, leave upon his mind their permanent *form* of beauty, as his guide to a true and

noble criticism. The progress and the aberrations of human reason, in its quest of truth, are as clearly appreciated by him, as the passages of happy skill or ignorant roving in some voyage of discovery, when the outlines and relations of the sphere on which it is made become fully known. Discerning distinctly the different kinds of evidence appropriate to different departments of truth, and weighing the scientific value of every idea and method of thought, he is not at the mercy of each superficial impression and obtrusive phase, presented to him by the subjects of his contemplation; but he attains a certain rational tact and graduated feeling of certainty in abstract matters of opinion, by which he escapes alike the miseries of undefined doubt, and the passions of unqualified dogmatism. In short, the great idea of Science is applied by him to the complicated workings of the mind of man; interprets the activities of his nature, and gives laws to the administration of his life; and, with wonderful analysis, investigates the properties, and establishes the equation, of their most labyrinthine curves.

Having endeavoured to furnish a General Idea of that half of Philosophy which it will be my duty to expound, I will now divide the whole science into the several compartments, through which I hope to lead you during the next five years. Our first object must undoubtedly be, to ascertain *what there is in* the mind,—a task, let me observe, by no means so easy as may at first be supposed. We have, it is true, one advantage over other sciences of observation,—that the mind, which is the object of attention, is always with us; but this avails little, if this same mind, which is also both observer and observer's instrument, is hard to train to such refinement of perception, and precision of measurement, as the phenomena require. Indeed our permanent presence with ourselves no more proves that practical psychology is a simple matter, than the everlasting spectacle of the sky removes the difficulties of practical astronomy. The *region* of phenomena may

be constant, but what more evanescent than the phenomena themselves? If, with every instrumental aid, it requires a nice eye to note the intersection of a star by the meridional wire, and a quick ear to single out the very beat of the pendulum on which the transit struck, it is an exercise of attention no less delicate to seize the instant when a thought occupies the centre of the field of consciousness; especially as it is not, like the star, an insulated object, seen in the solitude of an undistracting darkness, but a point immersed in a cluster similar to itself, or a scarce distinguishable member of some fugitive train of ideas ever gliding over the line of momentary perception. And this peculiarity of the mental, as compared with the physical objects of contemplation, imposes upon us a fresh task beyond the mere notice of the individual phenomenon; for if the idea which we contemplate be an element in a group, and never presents itself apart, the group must be analysed, and the particulars of its composite structure exhibited in their simplicity. If, on the other hand, we are studying a point, not in a simultaneous cluster, but in a successive train, the antecedent which introduces it, and the consequent appended to it, must be observed and registered. Moreover, the life of beings progressive as ourselves, unlike the periods of the incorruptible heavens, is characterized by an *order of development;* all its states have points of ascertainable commencement; its phenomena have had their first appearance, and its later affections are the complex and ever-enlarging results of previous conditions, each contributing some determinate increment towards their production. Hence, another part of our duty will be, to investigate the natural history of the mind's growth; to trace the steps by which, in the reciprocal action between the universe and man, the unshapen consciousness of infancy ripens into the comprehension of a Bacon, the creations of a Shakspere, the sanctity of a Pascal, or the virtues of a Howard. And then, since all analysis, brought to a philosophical completeness, must

have its corresponding and co-extensive synthesis, the whole of these processes of investigation do but prepare us to estimate the range and assign the limits of our mental faculties, to define the real sources of human knowledge, and the attainable objects of human pursuit; and must result in the establishment of a universal logic for all the sciences, and æsthetic rules for every form of art.

In this statement of the work which lies before us for the next two years, we have, in brief, the idea of a MENTAL PHILOSOPHY, whose office it is to note and register, according to some natural order, all the phenomena of the mind; to detect the occasions of their first appearance; to analyse their composition; to determine the laws of their succession; to estimate the value and proper direction of the several faculties, as instruments for the discovery of truth, the invention of beauty, and the increase of happiness. These are the contents, when the human mind is selected as the object of science, of that "Interpretation of Nature," in which all philosophy consists.

Among the notions which must fall under the examination of the mental philosopher, none stands in so important a relation to our whole life as the idea of *right and wrong;* and the analysis and scientific valuation of this must determine whether there is any illusion lurking in it; whether it is only a disguised form of some other feeling, or whether it is an ultimate and irresolvable, or, at all events, a true and reliable distinction of our being, having reference to positive differences in the objects which it contemplates; whether, in short, there exists in human nature any real foundation for moral obligation. Assuming that such foundation may be discovered, then, in addition to the question previously examined "What *is* our human nature?" there arises another,—"What *ought* to be our human nature?" In order to render an answer, we must furnish ourselves with some principles of ethical criticism, some method of rational judgment, by which the moral worth, not only of every act of direct volition, but of every affection

indirectly controllable by the will, may be ascertained. Such principles once selected, and every fallacious or inadequate criterion reviewed and discarded, they must be applied to make separation between the fitting objects of approval and of disapproval,—leading us to treat, primarily, of *subjective* morality, or the occupation of the mind with right sentiments; and, secondarily, of *objective* morality, or the adjustment and application in the life of these sentiments to the various external relations which call the individual man into action. This development of the conception of Duty,—this delineation of the *Ideal* of the human character,—constitutes MORAL PHILOSOPHY.

Objective morality does not fulfil its end till it has contemplated the human being in every position which the conditions of his nature and his lot may assign to him. The primary and simplest relations are those which subsist between *individual* and *individual;* and so long as we are engaged in ascertaining the rights and duties incident to these, we are still within the limits of *simple ethics*, and are prosecuting the doctrine of *Natural Law;* but when one, at least, of the two related parties is not an individual, but a *society*, or when they both exist within the limits of some community interested in their mutual relation, and claiming a voice in enforcing its obligations, there arises a new order of rights and duties,—so vast, so complicated, so involved with the whole history of civilized man, as to merit separation from the general theory of morals, and, under the head of POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY, to become the object of a distinct investigation. The advance into this portion of the science of man will put to the severest test the principles adopted as the clue through all previous perplexities. It is like the step in physics, from the elementary doctrine of mechanics to the problem of the three bodies; exhibiting a combination of forces, intricate at every moment, and varying with every period in the cycle of our world. It is no easy task to abstract from our idea of society, the casual peculiarities of that particular form of community in

the midst of which we live; to comprehend the types of human character and national association most widely removed from our own; to penetrate the culture, the habits, the religion of tribes and ages, occupying the opposite hemisphere of civilization: and, yet, without this, no social philosophy can exist,—no interpretation be found for the past vicissitudes of humanity, nor any just vaticinations be formed of its future development; but only some narrow notions of polity, as little meriting to be called a science, as a county court to adjudicate for the world. We must endeavour to elevate ourselves above our own local and historical position, to determine the essential conditions and states of character under which alone society can exist, to enumerate the permanent exigencies of every human community, to compute the natural moral forces most available in meeting these exigencies, and to compare the modes of organizing them into an engine of compact authority; to define the rights and duties consequent on the relations between citizen and citizen, between state and subject, between nation and nation;—in short, to mark the limits, to fix the principles of *Positive Law*, both national and international.

When we look at the mental changes which society develops in man, there is one which attracts our special attention, by its moral singularity, and the scale of its effects. It is this;—that his primitive want of food and shelter, meeting in his mind with various qualifying faculties and feelings, with the social affections and the love of distinction, with invention and forethought, with the perception of order and beauty,—undergoes a total transformation, and expands itself into the *Desire for Wealth.* This universal passion first creates the institution of property; and then, proceeding upon this fixed basis, produces the most gigantic results in every human community, giving an impulse of incalculable force and determinate direction to its internal character, and almost constructing the whole

edifice of its outward civilization. This passion induces new combinations of men, and methods of co-operation peculiar to itself; it establishes relations of the most complicated kind, greatly modifying the purely moral phenomena of nations; it distributes the population, regulates the industry, arranges the ranks, dictates the enterprises and alliances of states. It would be no wonder, then, if this single desire were withdrawn from the general mass of social elements, and a line thrown around it to secure for it a separate survey at the hands of science. Even this, however, is found to enclose too much; and a mere section of the field proves large enough to furnish another science of itself. That science is POLITICAL ECONOMY; which leaves out of view a great part of the effects arising from the love of property, and is content to trace and reduce to general laws the operation of this feeling on the production and distribution of wealth.

I have thus endeavoured to exhibit, in one articulated series before you, the successive portions of our great chain of moral sciences; which, like the vertebræ of a living organism, are all penetrated by one vital cord,—the psychology of man,—however different the relations which they hold in detail to the functions and movements of his being. With the exception of political economy, the whole succession of subjects has been for ages under the survey of human reason. The genius of not a few among the great minds of every country possessing a dignified place in history, has laboured, with the best instruments of thought existing at the time, to lay open the contents and settle the boundaries of this vast field. We must not be guilty of the presumption which has unhappily led many votaries of speculative and moral science to neglect the methods and opinions of their predecessors; to begin the whole work *de novo*, and impatiently to exclaim, with Hegel, "How long must we continue to drag along with us, as ballast, this trash of learning! Wonderful men must those ancients

have been, to busy themselves with something so entirely different from that which seems important to us!"* Surely this very circumstance, this different point of view occupied by other schools of thinkers, is the one conclusive reason for a careful study of their procedure and results. Taking their station differently from ourselves, raising their watch-tower of contemplation on a remote part of the great plain beneath us, they must have discerned, if not something *more*, at least something *else*, than we have descried. If there is one department of knowledge more than another in which a contemptuous disregard of the meditations and theories of distant periods and nations is misplaced, it is in the philosophy of man,—which can have no adequate breadth of basis till it reposes on the consciousness and covers the mental experience of the universal race; and to construct which out of purely personal materials, is like attempting to lay down the curves and finish the theory of terrestrial magnetism on the strength of a few closet experiments. No man, however large-thoughted and composite his mind, can accept of *himself* as the type of universal human nature. It will even be a great and rare endowment, if, with every aid of exact learning and unwearying patience, he is able to penetrate the atmosphere of others' understanding, and to observe the forms and colours which the objects of contemplation assume, when beheld through this peculiar medium. Simply to avail one's self of the experience of mankind, and know what it has really been, demands no little scope of imagination and versatility of intellectual sympathy. When these qualities are so deficient in a thinker that he cannot well achieve this knowledge, it is a great misfortune to his philosophy; when the want is such that he does not even desire it, it amounts to an absolute disqualification. Without, therefore, pledging ourselves to the eclectic principles which prevail in the present

* Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie, as quoted by Ritter, Gesch. der Philos. Vorrede, p. 3.

school of philosophy in France, we must beware of the intolerant dogmatism of Bentham in England, sanctioned, as we have seen, by one of the masters of the antagonist metaphysics in Germany. Indeed, it will be a chief purpose of all my lectures to enable you to profit by the light of other minds; in every province of the vast region which we shall explore together, to indicate the paths which they have traversed before, nor ever to turn away from their points of discovery, without raising some rude monument at least of honest and commemorative praise. To introduce you to the works, to interpret the difficulties, to do honour to the labours, to review the opinions, of the great masters of speculative thought in every age and in many lands, will be an indispensable portion of my duty;—a task most arduous indeed, but than which none can be more grateful to one who loves to trace, through all their affinities, the indestructible types of truth and beauty in the human mind; and to mark the natural laws, connecting together the most opposite continents and climes of thought, as parts, successively colonized and cultivated, of one great intellectual world. But in addition to the study of the several classes of psychological and moral doctrine as they present themselves in the *order of science*, it will be important to spread out the literature of philosophy before us in the *order of time;* to gain an insight into the natural development of successive modes of thought on speculative subjects; to notice the action and re-action of philosophy and practical life; to ascertain whether opinion on these abstract matters really advances into knowledge and has any determinate progression, or whether it oscillates for ever on either side of some fixed idea, or line of mental gravitation. In short, having surveyed our subject systematically, we shall go over it again chronologically; and call upon philosophy, when it has recited its creed, and revealed its wisdom, to finish all by writing its history.

In conclusion, I am not ignorant of the prejudices which

a certain class of minds entertain against metaphysical studies, and to which the national character of England,—so intent on the early production of practical and palpable fruits from every branch of human culture,—gives in this country a peculiar intensity. Complaints are often made of the uncertain and shadowy results from all speculative science: and certainly it will construct no docks; lay down no railways; weave no cotton; and, if civilization is to be measured *exclusively* by the scale and grandeur of its material elements, we can claim for our subject no large operation on human improvement. To use the words of Novalis (whose "*Philosophy*" included religion, natural and revealed) in one of his full and suggestive sentences, "Philosophy can bake no bread; but it can procure for us God, freedom, and immortality. Which, now, is more practical, philosophy or economy?"* Indeed, a mere superficial glance over the course and eras of the history of man is enough to convince us, that there must be something wrong in the low estimate frequently made of the bearing of the higher speculation upon human life. It has always flourished, not in the most barren, but precisely in the most productive periods of every nation's development. And if its visible acquisitions of certain knowledge are few, it yet seems to have stimulated the activity and nurtured the creative faculties of the human mind to an extent which it is difficult to appreciate. What periods could be least well spared from the progress of civilization? Surely, the golden ages of philosophy in Greece, and its revival in modern England, France, and Germany. What are the names, whose loss from the annals of our race would introduce the most terrible and dreary changes in its subsequent advance? Those of Plato and Aristotle in the ancient world; of Bacon, Locke and Kant in more recent times: and it is surely easier to conceive what we should have been without Homer, than without Socrates. History,

* Novalis Schriften, herausgegeben von. L. Tieck und Fr. Schlegel. 2r. Th. p. 124.

in every part, disowns this narrow-minded objection against the science of man, and scarcely acknowledges any exaggeration in that ancient praise which called it, "*Philosophiam, illam matrem omnium benefactorum, beneque dictorum.*"

II.

PLEA FOR PHILOSOPHICAL STUDIES.*

It has been thought proper that the opening of a new department of instruction within these walls should be marked by a few words, addressed less to the students who will statedly assemble in the class-room, than to the friends of the two institutions which are happily united under this roof. The late period at which this duty is devolved upon me, renders it unseasonable for me to speak of the auspices and hopes with which Manchester New College, as a whole, has commenced its metropolitan existence. Concurring in every sentiment uttered upon this subject on a more important occasion, and adding only a hearty congratulation on the encouraging experience of the last three months, I retire at once into the particular province assigned me, and will endeavour to explain the relations it bears in a comprehensive scheme of intellectual culture. In doing so, I shall be on my guard against the temptation, which besets every teacher,—not from any vain self-exaggeration, but from the deep persuasions of a limited experience,—to over-estimate his own special field of study. Indeed, there is nothing here to challenge such a tendency into action. Elsewhere, there are persons with whom it is a traditional habit to disbelieve all mental and moral science. Others, in the zeal of a new conversion, see in the metaphysician only the

* On taking the chair of Philosophy, Manchester New College, London, February, 1854.

lingering ghost of an age found dead upon the shore of time; and assure us that when the pious care of M. Comte has scattered sand enough upon the corpse, the spectre will vanish by the Stygian way. Had I to address judgments thus pre-occupied, I might be betrayed into too strenuous a vindication of a favourite pursuit. But I meet here those with whom a respect for philosophy is an inheritance and a necessity; who cannot but honour a study conquered for them by the sagacious genius and illustrated by the noble truthfulness of Locke; whose earnest meditations, both of thought and piety, have been in the companionship of the pure-minded Hartley; who are not less conscious than I am myself of unspeakable obligations to the versatile, comprehensive and guileless Priestley; and on whose shelves you rarely miss the acute and thoughtful volumes of Price. When I remember how largely the divinity of Dr. John Taylor, of Norwich, was affected by the studies which belonged to him as Ethical Tutor at Warrington, and how closely the name of Enfield is preserved in conjunction with that of Brucker, and, in general, how much our freer theology owes to the just balance of critical research and speculative reflection, I feel that there are pledges in the past for a worthy appreciation here of philosophical pursuits, and am resolved not to endanger that wholesome predisposition by immoderate and untenable claims. At the same time, there is danger as well as honour in belonging to a class rich in noble antecedents; danger of mistaking the heritage committed to our trust;—of cherishing with faithful pride the particular judgments delivered to us from the past, and letting slip the habits of severe activity, the fresh hopes of truth, the resolve to take a master's measure of the time, which saved our predecessors from merely repeating the symbols of an earlier age. Unless thought perpetually renews its youth and lifts a seeking eye afresh to the living light, decrepitude and waste befall whatever it has achieved; for the world's effective wealth is not so much in any deposit of hoarded truths on which the key of preservation can be

turned, as in the circulation of immediate thought, based, no doubt, upon that ancient store, but bringing into comparison the products and values of the hour. This is the great difference observable between physical and moral knowledge. The former, once gained, is capable of being embodied in practical arts, and handed over in its uses and applications to men and times quite unequal to its original apprehension; the latter remains all through absolutely dependent on the minds that deal with it,—lives with their life, dies with their death,—and though surviving as a habit or a formula, sinks, among the superficial and the unfaithful, from an inspiration to an inertia. You might set up the electric telegraph among the New-Zealanders, and train them to its use; and the Indians and Chinese are said to have command of many mechanical rules and astronomical methods, the grounds of which they have for ages ceased to understand. A people thus the depositary of a transmitted skill may continue, amid stagnation or decline, to send their messages and construct their almanacs with curious precision, and may profit by the science of the past. But the higher truths of morals and religion have another abode than in posts and wires, and cannot be laid down in cables through the sea; no equation can contain or usage work them. They subsist only for him who discerns them freshly out of himself; they are realized in so far as they are apprehended; and their very use and application being at the heart instead of the surface of our nature, their function is extinct when they cease to be re-discovered and re-believed, and are only remembered and preserved. In other words, it is the thirst for fresh truth that alone can retain the old: and the intellect, not less than the character, will fail even to hold its own when it ceases to pray and to aspire. It is the peculiar office of philosophy to sustain this unexhausted energy of hope, this search after a deeper and more comprehensive conception of things. Other pursuits may do more to increase the stock of positive and definite knowledge; but without *this* to furnish impulse and interpretation,

their zeal is unspeakably lowered, and their results are but a barren sand-heap of particulars. That in stating this I make no arbitrary assertion, and point not even to any accidental fact, but to a necessary and universal law, may, I think, be made manifest to any moderately reflecting person.

All knowledge, it is evident, is a *relative* apprehension of things, a *plurality* of which it is necessary to constitute every cognitive act. It involves in every case a process of *comparison*, resulting in a perception of resemblance and difference. Nothing can be put, as it were, into a mental vacuum, and known in and by itself; but even the simplest affirmation you can make about it, assigns to it a character by which you *discriminate* it from what it else would be. Say it is *red*, and you pick it out from the other colours; say it is *round*, and you shut the door on the remaining forms: say it is *one*, and you imply that it might have been more. The *expressed* term, whatever it be, which you employ, is significant only with reference to another which is *suppressed* and held behind it; and your assertion may, with equal propriety, or at least with identical result, be regarded as an affirmation performed upon the one or a negation upon the other. The negative sphere, however, being indefinite, and required for the moment only as a background to throw out the positive image, is apt to elude attention and perform its function quite secretly; so that many persons may even be unaware of this necessary dualism of thought. Yet it is certain that, if we never look at our background, the objects in front will not show right; and illusion is just as possible by error in the mind's neutral tint, as by a false laying on of the pure colour. A *relation* cannot be rightly apprehended till you can take your stand at either end to contemplate the other at will,—till you are equally familiar with both its terms; and that which remains negative to the unreflecting, may, in its turn, become positive to you. That this ability to shift the mental station, and deal freely with the two sides of a relation, is the genuine mark of human intelligence as distinguished from animal

sagacity, will hardly be denied. A dog recognizes his master by certain characteristics, the absence or disguise of which would baulk his instinct, and so far his intelligence avails itself of the same guidance as ours; but I do not suppose that he gives any account to himself of his grounds of judgment, or can set forth the signs which he observes over against the others from which they are differenced. If you say that he *knows* the person, at all events he does not *know how he knows*. The same character of *immediate*, in opposition to *reflective* apprehension, belongs to all the lower grades of human intelligence. The craftsman who can perform some act of manual skill, he cannot tell you how,—the shrewd observer who reads off a posture of affairs by happy guess, —the arbitrator who reaches a right decision by a path he is unable to explain,—may all of them indeed possess great force of understanding, giving them vast advantage over weaker men who, with more ability to say what they are doing, have nothing half so well worth telling: but it would assuredly be better for themselves and for the world, could the road of their thought be traced on the permanent map of human existence, and did they move over it with open eye, instead of being carried to their destination in a trance. The utmost attainment reached by this practical class of men, is the accidental possession of correct conceptions, unsecured by any mastery of their *grounds*, and unqualified by any sense of the merits which other opinions may possess. This itself, even should they never make a mistake, falls far short of that view of things which distinguishes a scientific intellect: it is an intrusion of brute instinct into a region beyond its proper range: it has all the unsocial, isolating character of a power that can neither teach nor learn, and which, accordingly, the possessor has all to himself; and misses the genial tendency of that broad human intelligence which, relying on its own like workings in every mind, looks out for mutual communion, exchanges interrogation and reply, learns to confess itself and ask for help, and feels itself in sympathy with the life of the universe and the

thought of God. Hence it is that men of intuitive sagacity, unsoftened by a large speculative discipline, are usually dogmatical and overbearing; announcing their judgment, but scarcely knowing how they formed it; content, when asked to defend it, with announcing it over again; or else pouring out a torrent of pretended reasons, turbid in itself, and often remarkable for washing their conclusion right away. Indeed, dogmatism, so far as it has its seat in the intellectual habits, rather than in a culpable self-will, seems to consist precisely in this,—that you apprehend your object as immediately given, carrying straight on to it your own preconceptions and forms of thinking, and letting your mind work upon it instinctively and unwatched; and, never dreaming of any possible speck upon your glass, and borrowing another to try again, you insist that the reality is and must be what you see. In such a state of feeling, the circle of relations in which the object is discerned is too narrow, and in each instance is too much contemplated from one end to give scope for that sentiment of wonder and reverence which Plato pronounces to be the beginning of wisdom, or that sense of the largeness of truth, which is as water to the root of intellectual modesty.

Each of the great departments of knowledge engages itself with its own peculiar system of relations. The *physical sciences*, which investigate *nature*,—the *literæ humaniores*, which study *society* and its products,—*theology*, which seeks for *God*,—severally occupy themselves with comparisons and groupings exclusively within their respective provinces. Under the first, the discrimination of types among integral individuals constitutes, *e.g.*, natural history; the primary attributes of the body yield the quantitative sciences; the secondary, those of quality. Under the second, the languages, the literature, the politics, the individual lives, the national histories of men, are brought into a circle and made to strike the lights of mutual analogy and contrast. Under the third, some positive religion (Christianity, for instance) is passed through the series of possible schemes,

till it reveals their essence and its own. In every instance the same truth holds good,—that your knowledge consists in the perception of relations; is extensive in proportion as they are numerous; and profound, according as you are familiar with each relation both ways or only one. You understand a particular kind of animated being, when looking inwards you see how its parts constitute a system, and again, looking outwards and around, how this system stands with regard to other types of organized existence. You are acquainted with a literature, when the characteristic of its poets, its historians, its philosophers, co-exist in your conception, and, as the collective expression of the genius of a people, the whole can be assigned to its place among the products of the human mind. And you understand Christianity as a divine agency in history, when amid its versatile manifestations you can trace the fibres of a common spiritual life pervading all, and can group around it its analogues and contrasts in the series of faiths and philosophies.

But besides these special relations proper to each sort of knowledge, there is *one* which is co-extensive with knowledge itself and is constitutive of its very nature; viz., the relation between the knowing faculty and the known object, be it what it may; between the power that thinks and the reality that is thought. Plant the mind where you please on the field of existence, it will carry *itself* thither,—will look out of its own window, and see nature through the framework of its own limits and the shade of its own colour. What it perceives must be contingent not less on its own constitution than on the constitution of the object. Whether there is any rescue for us from this dependence, whether we can ever pretend to reach *things as they are*, or must be content with them *as they appear*, it is needless now to inquire. It is plain, at all events, that we make no approach to such rescue by studying more, and ever more, of mere external matters; for should there be illusion at all lurking in the form of thought, it does but multiply itself

with our intellectual action, and is only more monstrous in the learned than in the nescient. If there be hope at all, it must be sought in the inverse direction, by turning round upon the inner side of knowledge, and scrutinizing the mind's act instead of the mind's object; by ascertaining what sort of business this is that goes on in our person, when we perceive and judge and think and will. Certain it is, that it is an affair which is conducted sometimes better, sometimes worse; and if we can only find out where the difference lies, and learn to detect the admitted signs of perversion when we see them, we shall at least get rid of all artificial incumbrance of error, and strip the faculties bare to their native configuration, and watch the undisguised play of their natural action. Is it too much to say, that, all knowledge being relative, it only half exists till you are familiar with the *home*-term of the foreign relation?—that, while you remain fixed upon the *foreign* one, you may have indeed correct apprehension, but no finished insight? This perhaps is the ultimate meaning of the Socratic dictum, that *Self-knowledge* is at once the condition and the complement of all other; twin-birth of the same instant, placed by kindly nature in the same incunabula, and intended to advance *pari passu* to maturity. Socrates felt that there had been a fatal separation between physical and moral studies, between the quest of nature and the interrogation of thought; and by making it his art to probe the rational consciousness and bring ideas to the birth, he intended not to set up any rival knowledge, so much as to penetrate to the ground of all knowledge. Nor is it less true now than it was then, that a profound introspection, a systematic psychological vigilance, is needed as a running commentary on the cyclopedia of external fact and history. I will not say that you may not be a good geometer without appreciating the logical nature of axioms and definitions; or an excellent astronomer without troubling yourself with controversies respecting force and causality; for each science is at liberty to build upon its

own foundation, as ready-made and given, and has only to state its own first principles, and not to ground them. But though, under these conditions, you may possess yourself of the contents of many sciences, you will understand the rationale of none; and with ever so perfect an apprehension of the nexus among the parts, the validity of the whole will float in the mist of insecure hypothesis. This state of things is, in the long run, exceedingly hurtful to soundness and largeness of judgment; and when the time comes for discussion to pass out beyond the professional circle of facts and laws into wider relations, embracing many sciences or transcending all, none are so apt to be bewildered and without a clue, swaying by unsteady impulse into credulity or scepticism, as those who have been imprisoned in a particular province, and have cramped their mental aptitudes to the shape of its special logic.

We are constantly told, indeed, by those who imagine the new Organon to have superseded the old, that false metaphysics are the sure parent of false science. But they forget that *no*-metaphysics are sure to be *false*. For what are they? Their negative name is a delusive mask; and no man can reason on these matters at all, no man can even rail at metaphysics, without a metaphysic hypothesis at heart; and the only question is, whether he will reverently seek it by wide and patient toil, and consciously possessed of it, call it by its name, or whether he will pick it up among the accidents of another quest, and have it about him without knowing what it is. Nothing is more common than to see maxims, which are unexceptionable as the assumptions of particular sciences, coerced into the service of a universal philosophy, and so turned into instruments of mischief and distortion. That "we can know nothing but phenomena," —that "causation is simply constant priority,"—that "men are governed invariably by their interests,"—are examples of rules allowable as dominant hypotheses in physics or political economy, but exercising a desolating tyranny when thrust on to the throne of universal empire. He who seizes

upon these and similar maxims and carries them in triumph on his banner, may boast of his escape from the uncertainties of metaphysics, but is himself all the while the unconscious victim of their very vulgarest deception, and does but chase the mirage which they always create when their atmosphere is putrescent with materialism and moral decay. And surely the longer you make the catalogue of offences charged against false philosophy, the more do you complete the argument for the study and the search of true, as the only possible or even conceivable corrective; for it is needless to say, you cannot exclude the ideal theory by chemistry, or encounter Spinoza with geologic laws, and clear the field of David Hume with the widest sweep of comparative grammar. The very mischief and perversions of human judgment which you deplore, and which occupy so large a place in the history of civilized nations, cannot be appreciated except by a mind sensitive to logical distinctions, and able to see its way amid the shades of deep reflection.

The most serious and solemn expression in which the feeling and character of other ages have embodied themselves,—I mean the mythologies and theologies of ancient heathen and Christian nations,—must present a melancholy aspect of absurdity and logomachy to one who has no key of metaphysic fellow-feeling wherewith to enter into thei inner significance; he must remain stranger to the best intellectual feature of the present time, the disposition to study the past developments of humanity in the mood of sympathy rather than of alienation, and to distrust every judgment which has nothing genial in it to abate its scorn; and must keep his place among those harsh critics who, scrape as they may at the outside of error and evil, can never find its heart. Speaking to the supporters of a theological institution, I ask, what can any one make of the Nicene controversy and the whole growth of the Trinitarian doctrine, who takes it merely from the modern English point of view, and does not bring to it a mind steeped in that Hellenic philosophy for whose conceptions it

endeavoured to find evangelic expression? or how, without an inner acquaintance with the scholastic realism, can any sense be extracted from the discussions respecting the Eucharist? Or, again, who can in the least appreciate the Pelagian struggle, and measure the grand figure of Augustine and his shadow stretched upon us still, that shrinks from the great argument of our moral nature, and esteems the discussion of Fate and Free-will the proper business only of revolted spirits? Nay, did we even teach our young divines no history at all,—were we content to throw them, with only modern outfit, upon the world of to-day,—the case would scarcely be improved. Of one of them the lot is cast, we will suppose, in a district of manufacturing activity; and on the other side of the street to his little chapel stands the hall of local *Secularism*, where the doctrine of circumstances and the constitution of man are expounded, and the basis of Theism is disputed, and mild proposals are entertained for perfecting the State by superannuating the Church. Another, perhaps, is settled with a society where one or two of the most intelligent members, with habits of thought trained exclusively in the medical lecture-room or the engineer's college, have been reading Comte, and learned to look upon the pulpit as a mediæval relic. A third, in the walks of a London pastorate, finds himself among some generous youths, driven by the meaner aspects of competition, or inspired by Alton Locke, to grasp at Socialistic dreams. A fourth, placed on the Committee of a Mechanics' Institution, meets with associates afflicted with the Carlylian phrenitis, and given to strong declaiming on the subject of the "Jenseits" and the "personal God." A fifth finds a pleasant and thoughtful neighbour in the young Independent minister, who has found in Coleridge and Maurice a blessed emancipation from the rigours of dogma once oppressive, and images of terror once unrelieved. These, I need hardly insist, are not exceptional phenomena which it is arbitrary and far fetched to imagine. They are the marking facts, the living characteristics, of our

time,—the actual present out of which the morrow will be made. And with these aspects of belief and tendency no one is qualified to deal who is not supplied with some philosophic apparatus of thought, and has not faculties trained by a philosophical gymnastic. If the problems of the time are not to pass us by, if we are to share in the intellectual and moral enterprises on which they are bound, the step must not be reluctant, and the energy must not be slow, with which we resolve to overtake their march. Theoretic studies stand, in our day, among the first of practical necessities. To lament the fact, is useless; to change it, is impossible; there is wisdom only in adopting it. The greatest adversary of "German mysticism" and German dialectic cannot distrust more thoroughly than I do the soundness, not only of the system which on the continent is ascendant for the hour, but of all the vast schemes for replacing *faith* in the "Absolute" by *knowledge* thereof; and it is with deliberate conviction that I profess adherence to the English psychological method, and build all my hope for philosophy on accurate self-knowledge. But this very position can no longer be quietly assumed and supposed to be in our possession; it has been lost by our want of vigilance, as compared with the intense activity of that foreign speculation which now invades us; and it must be won by a polemic resting on new points of support, and not ignorant of the dispositions with which it has to deal. The metaphysic foe, however barbarous and even pagan you may pronounce him, will not quit his entrenchments for ever so much scolding: you may have his camp if you will; but then you must go and take it; and for this end some equipment will be needful.

I trust that I have guarded myself sufficiently against any suspicion of one-sided vindication of my particular department. To preclude, however, the possibility of misapprehension, I would add that, if external and historical studies require philosophy for their interpreter and soul, philosophy no less requires them for its body and means of

balance. It might seem at first as if, for self-knowledge, the mind would be its own sufficient company, and, shut up in its own communion, would learn the laws by which its faculties exist and act. It will be found, however, that only before the mirror of other minds can our nature truly see itself. By a rule of mutual dependence, we are awakened to self-consciousness by the life of others, whom again we rouse to inward discovery by our own. It is not only that we see in them new facts which enlarge our view of human nature as an object of outward observation, but they reveal us more profoundly to ourselves, by touching springs within us that had slept before; and of the whole compass of our being the greater part remains latent and unexplored till the light of a kindred experience bursts into it and spreads throughout its depths. Without a large association with the different forms of thought and passion, especially without a studious communion with the genius and wisdom of ages other than our own, mere introspection would be but a barren thing, for there would be little in ourselves of that which it is worthiest to know. The more we mingle with the noble crowd of poets, historians, statesmen and philosophers, who, in various dialect and under contrasted civilizations, have uttered the enduring wants and sentiments of humanity, so much the more (provided always we admire and love before we criticize) does the circumference of our nature expand, and answer in its dimensions to the great world assigned us to understand. But the value of such learning is contingent on its really *coming home to you*, and finding out in you the very seats of feeling and conception from which it sprung; till it does this, and you are conscious that in knowing more of mankind you know more of yourself, it remains little else than an assortment of archæologic lumber, and makes you *heavier*, but not *larger*. The efficacy of all erudite attainment is not realized till it carries you to the *genesis* of the human phenomena with which it brings you into contact, and you apprehend them as the form and development of an inner

life. The true principle of a perfect mental culture is perhaps this;—to preserve an accurate balance between the studies which carry the mind out of itself and those which recall it home again,—between attention to matter given it, and reflection on its own processes and laws. The several departments of knowledge, prosecuted singly and exclusively, fulfil this condition in very different degrees. Speaking generally of the three great divisions, we may say, that the physical sciences violate it at the one extremity, by giving overwhelming preponderance to outward observation and induction of necessary laws; that theology and metaphysics violate it at the other extremity, by giving too much substance to the forms of inner thought and feeling, and encouraging the student to coerce nature into the arrangements of a speculative framework; while literary pursuits, engaging us as they do with men's affairs, —the human with the human,—occupy the middle place, and afford us objects, to know which is to lose a portion of our self-ignorance.

And among these central studies, it is easy to see why *language* occupies the very focal place, and has been justly recognized as supplying the faculties with their most effective discipline. For here the equipoise between external attention and internal reflection is maintained more perfectly than is possible elsewhere. Who can say whether language is an outer or an inner fact? It is evidently both. As a realized object of sense, transmitted from point to point of space, and recorded from age to age of time, it is manifestly external, and spreads its relations visibly before the eye, and lies open, like any material product of physical nature, to the simultaneous notice of innumerable observers. On the other hand, as the mere passage of thought and feeling out of silence, the direct outcome of our intellectual and spiritual life, it is a primary function of the inner mind, the mere incarnation (so to speak) of our highest energy. Accordingly, it has no significance, it is not an object of study at all, except on condition of self-knowledge; its

distinctions, its classifications, its shades of relation, its forms of structure, are the very distinctions, and classifications, and relations, and architecture, of thought itself; and whoever engages himself with them, does but see his own intelligence externalized. Dealing with a fact of physical nature, you have to collect or guess its place and meaning in the system of things from its grouping or its look; but in handling the phenomena of language, you invert the proceeding, and carry into it from your own consciousness the idea that gives it shape; having the essence at home, you interpret by it the foreign form. I believe it is this necessary action and reaction of acute observation and thoughtful reflection, to which a philological discipline owes its peculiar advantage for training the faculties with less distortion than any other single pursuit. But the desired end is gained in a much higher degree by a plurality of studies; and especially, if an addition be made on the mathematical and physical side to the grammatical centre of gravity, it is important to annex on the other side the counterpoise of psychological and ethical philosophy. Even in the teaching and management of each of these separate departments, much may be done to maintain the equlibrium of mental exercise; and as the historical studies of this place are conducted, I well know, with constant reference to philosophical truth, and penetrated with a profound philosophical insight,—so will it be my endeavour perpetually to check and test philosophical theory by regard to historical fact, and construct it less on the narrow base of egoistical reflection, than on the broad area presented by the recorded consciousness of mankind.

To the pursuits which I am appointed to represent, I can scarcely anticipate that the objection will *here* be made that is sometimes advanced against them, that they deal with problems which an express Revelation has settled; into which it was indeed inevitable that Reason should look, when no better guidance was at hand; but the further dis-

cussion of which is superseded for Christians. The objection, it is plain, even when limited to *Ethics*, mistakes the nature both of moral science and of revealed religion. Upon no theory that I ever heard of, is the thing revealed the same that our science wants to know; nor does Revelation, even upon its own ground, in any way interfere with the simultaneous aspirations of Philosophy. Whatever truths, whatever duties, are first opened to us by Christianity, are either authoritatively announced, or brought out by the silent and continuous operation of its spirit upon the soul. If they are simple oracular deliveries, they are presented without their grounds, and those grounds remain yet to seek; and though implicit obedience may be due and may be given in any case, whether we succeed or not, there is surely an additional consent, and (may we not say?) an additional beauty before the eye of God, in a service rendered no longer by a blind docility, but with brightened look and full power of the undivided and understanding soul. And if there be any provision in Christianity for the growing evolution of divine truth and human discernment, then does this very process constitute a new fact in the history and experience of humanity,—a fact whose law and whose moral traces it is the business of a reverential philosophy to follow. Indeed, Christianity, it is plain, does not come to us as to godless and irresponsible animals, but presupposes the faculties by which we attain to faith in God and a sense of duty, and addresses us as beings to whom sin and sorrow, prayer and trust, are not unknown. To justify these faiths which revelation assumes,—to interpret this conscience to which it appeals,—remain therefore, in any case, offices in attempting which philosophy does not pass the forecourt of our religion. And even then, whatever we learn beyond this, is still, if it be truth, something having reality in the universe,—something that cannot, therefore, be without its trace and its manifold relations; and, once knowing it, we may recognize its look where else we had not suspected it, and may hope, by its

light, to read off the significance of the world and of our life more profoundly than before. To do this, is in exact accordance with the aim of moral research. In truth, the larger the universe of our faith, the more copious are the phenomena delivered to our philosophy. So that Christianity, far from contracting the compass of our science, rather expands it to its own sublime proportions.

III.

THE CHRISTIAN STUDENT.*

GENTLEMEN,—In obedience to the wish of the College authorities, it devolves upon me to give you public greeting at the commencement of another session, and to say a few words respecting the duties in which it is about to engage us. If I rightly interpret the spirit of my task, these opening Addresses are designed at once to attune our own minds aright, by striking the true key-note of our studies here, and to invite and justify the sympathy of friends who for the moment may cease to be outside spectators of our work, and permit us to open what glimpses we can into the interior. To some of you this week begins an untried career; to all of us it offers a fresh stage: and while the space before us is yet clear and free, pledged to no folly and ready for all worth, it is the fitting hour for tracing the right path across it, and gathering up our forces to tread it firmly to the end. Not without reason have men in every age deemed it impious to float idly through the gates of new possibility; have felt a sacredness to hang around the *beginnings* of things; and made a thoughtful pause upon the threshold of each enterprise, in order to possess themselves of its whole spirit ere they set a foot upon its ground. For it is in effect only the first steps in any trust that are truly ours. Faithfulness and wisdom exercised at that crisis

* To the Students of Manchester New College, London. Opening of Session, October, 1856.

have in them a self-continuing power: but the false path is often impossible to retrace; the over-vehement speed brings the penalty of exhaustion and the shame of violated resolve; the idle start entails the idler mood, and as the race is harder, the force grows less. It is well, then, for us who here engage in a common work, to re-seek its primary inspiration before we become again entangled in its details,—to catch once more "the great Taskmaster's eye," and read there the full meaning of the charge committed to us. And if in our meditations we can at all bring out into view the essential idea of your life as Christian students, the whole organism of your appointed studies will receive its interpretation, and its several constituents answer for themselves to the criticisms of external observer. I am far indeed from pretending, on behalf of the conductors and professors of this Institution, that its intellectual discipline is perfect in its shape and distribution, or invariably happy in its results. But I believe that in proportion as its critics, rising above the impatient tastes and partial standards of the hour, apprehend the permanent conditions of the Christian ministry in the world, they will find the more reason to respect its aims and plan, and (with us) to seek improvement mainly by bringing its realization nearer to its idea.

The single end for which this Institution exists, and by reference to which all its methods and spirit must be judged, is *the training of a body of men devoted to the advancement of the Christian life.* If the Christian life were not *our divine and authoritative ideal*, by which we are bound to try all human things,—or if its nature did not allow the service of any *class of special labourers*,—or if its standard of perfection were simply something *given and stationary*, to be held stiffly aloft, without any provision for movement with the moving host of men,—there would be no ground on which to rest the claims of this College. It springs from those who believe in a "Kingdom of Heaven" as the secret life and final issue of human probation,—who look

upon the Church of Christ as its incipient embodiment and perpetual symbol,—who find in that Church functions of teaching and guidance which should be committed only to qualified and disciplined minds,—and who so trust the expansiveness of God's spirit within this sacred Institute, that they will not bind themselves to any of its customary forms of dogma or of usage, but hold themselves not less free towards the types of the future than reverential towards those of the past. This last feature it is,—of an open theology,—by which we are here distinguished from other Christian schools,—a feature to which I trust we shall ever remain faithful,—without which we should represent a very limited history, instead of a very vast hope,—which, far from presenting a merely negative principle, is an expression of positive faith and confiding piety above the range of party and the atmosphere of doubt,—and which assuredly does but preserve the prospective attitude of mind induced by Divine Revelation, all the more thankful for the "elder prophets" that they set us looking for ever fresh "consolations to Israel." In parting from the world, Christ "had yet many things to say" to his disciples, but "they could not bear them" then. Some of them, no doubt, have found their utterance in the ages that have since elapsed; but if the "Comforter" that tells them to the heart "abides with us for ever," who shall forbid our prayer for deeper insight, or reproach us with scepticism in the present because our eye is yet open towards the future? When the founders of our institutions refuse to involve them in the contingencies of doctrinal definition, it is from no want of clear and fervent faith for their own life; it is because, in their view, God has more light than is needed for guiding *them*, and the Church of Christ is no completed thing, but a perpetual protest against evil never vanquished, and a pressure towards a Kingdom of Heaven never reached.

What, then, is that "Christian life" to the advancement of which we devote a spiritual order of men? Wherein does its essence consist, by which it is separated from

other types of human thought and character, and shews us the falsehoods and dangers we are to withstand? If it is the life conformed to Christ's, what else can it be than the entire abnegation of self out of pure surrender to a God holy, affectionate and infinite? If there be any words that can express in brief the very kernel of the heart of Christendom, they are surely these,—"*the living sacrifice.*' This thought it is that makes the crucifix sublime,—that gives its calm and sad intensity to Christian Art,—that sings in the Agnus Dei,—and fills the interval between the heroic and the saintly mind. It is not, indeed, that sacrifice of selfish desires has ever been unknown among men, and can be claimed as a novelty in the ethics of the gospel. Our spiritual nature is and ever was a theatre of conflicting impulses, where, under even the darkest conditions, the higher has often prevailed. But the difference is this,—that the Pagan self-conquest has been a *self-assertion;* the Christian, a *self-surrender.* The one has presented itself as a preference of reason to passion, of honour to meanness, of generosity to unworthy ease; the other, as a relinquishment of personal will to diviner guidance, a free passing into the living hand of God. The one has recognized nothing but human morality in the august forms of the Good and Right; the other has seen veiled within them the Holiest of all. This conscious identification of God with whatever is felt to be claiming us, this overshadowing sense of His communion with us in every higher trust and admiration, this investiture of the whole moral life with a sacramental value, is the distinctive characteristic of the Christian temper. The ideal it sets before us seeks its realization by other means than *self-culture;* rather by passing out of the personal centre, and permitting the will to drop away in faith and prayer. The peculiar humility and reverence which tinge the minds most deeply baptized in our religion, are but the natural light of this inner trust 'looking upward and shining through. To keep alive this Christ-like spirit, by becoming

its organs and conveying it into the world of human affairs, is the proper function of the sacred ministry.

But how is it possible to *train* men for an office like this? How bring the preparation under rule and system? Is it not rather a thing of heavenly gift than of human acquisition? If the native inspiration be not there, is it not a vain attempt even to make the *poet?* and to make the *prophet* a vainer still? And if the living call *be* there, will it not make itself effectual without our aid? or, at least, without that elaborate and protracted culture on which we here insist?

Most assuredly there are higher conditions needed for this work than the wisest educators can command. If there be not some heavenly temper in the clay, rendering it mellower than the coarser stuff of our humanity, no hand of ours can mould it into vessels worthy of the temple, with the sacred emblems sharply cut. And our first duty unquestionably is, to select and destine to the service of our churches those only in whom there is some dawn of God's prophetic spirit, some clearness and depth of conscience, some tender lights of affection, some glow of young enthusiasm, giving fair promise of the coming day. Let it be freely admitted that the presence of a student, after reasonable probation, within this College, ought to afford a presumption of some peculiar gifts; not of that knowledge only which anyone may acquire, or that moral faithfulness which can be dispensed with in none; but of lively sympathy, of ready self-forgetfulness, of quick recoil from evil, and heart open to reverence and devotion. It were greatly to be desired that the destination of young men to the ministry among us were determined much less than it is by external accidents and conditions, and more by intrinsic aptitudes, irrespective of condition. Could we but draw to this office all in whom the fitting graces lie ready though unconfessed, its whole aspect and character would rapidly change; the neutral natures and inferior aptitudes would desert it of themselves; it would become

a power of the first magnitude, and achieve again a work in society which there is still no other agency to perform. Shall it for ever remain the exclusive glory of Roman Catholicism, that she needs no secular bribes to bring to her altar the service of every outward and inward rank,—not of laborious mediocrity alone, but of capacity, of opulence, of genius?

When once the right selection of persons has been made, the problem is, "for the given aptitudes to find the fitting discipline." A portion,—a most momentous portion,—of the student's preparation here must consist in his simply following out the impulses that brought him hither,—in living out his self-dedication,—and giving perpetual and healthy exercise to the holy and human affections in which he has recognized the calling Word of God. It is a dangerous thing to let any noble inspiration pine and die for want of genial air and free movement in its proper field; and most imperfect and unnatural would be a training for the Christian Ministry, in which no room was left for the practical gymnastic of benevolence and piety. If the whole soul is not sustained in equal action,—if during the years when the intellectual character sets and ripens, the spiritual roots of the character feed only on the sap of *thought*, no vigorous and hardy growth will ever be possible. To the young, as to the mature, books and life are the correctives and interpreters of each other; and the receptive understanding needs the invigorating balance of the productive conscience. For my own part, I can never look with jealousy on the Sunday-school, the Domestic Mission, the village preaching, as injurious competitors for the attention of the student of divinity; but rather regard them as friendly allies, furnishing a needful supplement to the work of the class-room and the common hall. I have no fear that the young divine who seeks, in the humility of Christian service, some foretaste of his future experience, and tests his theological progress by intercourse with the poor, the suffering or

the child, will relax the nerve of study and reduce his thirst for truth. On the contrary, he will lose the fatal lassitude of weak affections, and the caprices of a morbid will; and the busy brain will often find less refreshment from passive intermission than from acts of conscience that bring the peace of God. Hence the way should be left open, as indeed it is, for a dué mingling of kindly self-sacrifice and deeper spiritual experience with the studious pursuits characteristic of this place. But, after all, this higher discipline of character must ever remain an affair rather of private faithfulness than of public provision. And even without going beyond the range of your immediate studies, you have a noble problem to attack. You have to see that the divine life within you is not overgrown and stifled by the intellectual; to keep the running waters pure and fresh under that rich growth. There is no necessary sanctity in the mere mental discipline of theology; and to expect any wiser or holier mood by simply stepping out of heathen into ecclesiastic literature, and transferring your critical eye from the page of Aristotle to that of St. Paul, would be a vain reliance. Throughout your course, the studies which engage you, be their subject sacred as it may, will stand related to you as *your secular business;* will bring the temptations inseparable from every human pursuit; and must be prevailed over and consecrated by a living spirit of earnest and aspiring devotion. Once depart from simple, truthful openness to heavenly things, and your knowledge will but terminate in that sad spectacle,—the *connoisseur in religion*, who knows all about it except itself; who has mastered every theory respecting God, but not yielded himself to the Infinite Reality.

So great is the persuasive power of intense conviction and personal devotion, that there are those who depreciate everything else, and who especially evince an impatience of the elaborate complexity and range of our educational training for the ministry. They look at the fewness and simplicity of the great Christian truths,—

which may be taught to a child in the catechism, and have been condensed by the wise into compendious creeds; and they ask why these, after due comparison with Scripture, cannot be carried straight into life and applied to the duties and beliefs of men. Or they are struck, perhaps, by the contrast between the inartificial gifts of the earliest missionaries and the vast outfit of the modern divine; and fancy that by stripping off the intellectual incumbrance, we should get the apostles back again. But the scope of mental culture proper for the sacred office in one age, cannot be determined either by the wants of another, or by the absolute and permanent contents of Christian doctrine. A far other rule must be appealed to, which yields a very different reply. Be the life of a people or a period what it may, *its religion must be equal to the whole of it*, covering and pervading and penetrating every interest of action or of thought. There is nothing in which Christian Faith is to be denied its voice; and it goes freely, as to its own, into every field that bears the footprints of humanity. It is vain for the secular and the spiritual powers of the world to negotiate a division of territory by which each shall bar out the other; no treaty, no award, can trace a boundary-line, any more than a mountain chain or trending coast can keep out the Almighty Maker of them both. The Kingdom of Heaven is in its very essence a universal theocracy; and God existing, nothing is at heart the same as if He existed not. It is a fatal thing to let any province of life constitute itself outside of the religious realm, and, under plea of being no insurgent land, excuse itself from consecration. So long as the national ideas were as simple and limited as those of the Hebrew race in the first century, so long the gospel needed more the intensity of God's spirit than its breadth; its possessor had an answer for every question, and neither slurred nor scorned any genuine want. But no sooner did it find itself in the midst of an Hellenic and a Roman civilization, than it had to deal with new problems, and

penetrate to other seats of thought and consciousness in the human soul; and it expanded to the full capacity of those fresh demands, and obtained representatives who could use up the truth of Plato, and put a living fire into the ethics of Cicero. Well would it have been if no meaner interests had ever checked this adaptive genius in our religion, and made it seem unequal to the exigencies of advancing time. But there are two ways of seeking harmony between its spirit and the general course of the human mind, and preventing either from overlapping the province of the other; by taking all new knowledge in, or by shutting all new knowledge out; by keeping open the capacity of faith, or keeping closed the limits of discovery. And for ages past the ancient Church of Christendom, having unhappily consecrated its cast-iron measure of doctrine, will not allow the universe to be bigger than that can reach: and hence, religion having become fixed, advancing culture becomes "profane;" and proceeds without a blessing, rather than not proceed at all. One after another, sciences have emerged and constituted themselves, tastes and habits have acquired social power, for which the Church, called universal, has no greeting or recognition,—which her philosophy pronounces to be nescience, and her casuistry condemns as godless. In the vain attempt to maintain against enlargement the narrow frontier of an earlier time, her empire over the human mind is gone; and the Church, unequal to her ever-expanding trust, drops behind and becomes historical.

Nor has Protestantism hitherto been much wiser; it has let the problem slip in another way. The old Christianity grasps at universality by holding its ancient confines, and resolutely denying that what lies beyond is really in the universe at all. The reformed Christianity surrenders the pretention to universality, releases the revolted provinces of knowledge from their allegiance, and proclaims them free; hoping by this prudent concession to retain the parent land unaffected by the giant growths it has disengaged. In

virtue of this treaty of peace, intellectual research in every direction asserts its right to be purely secular, and to proceed as if it stood in no relation at all to faith; it studiously weeds out of its language and modes of thought every vestige of a religious idea, and assumes that reason might live upon the very same terms in a divine or an atheistic universe. Ingenuity is exhausted to invent for every truth neutral and abstract expressions which may serve equally in either way; and a sublime affectation of indifference becomes part of the established etiquette of scientific diplomacy. The understanding seems to be, "If you will not meddle with our geology (for instance), we will behave politely to your divinity." And yet the radical insincerity of this mutual neutrality is evident through so thin a veil. It is not true that the two lines of thought are separately pursued; on the contrary, the traveller on each feels an intense interest,—be it of sympathy or of antipathy,—in the procedure on the other; and often derives his chief impulse from the secret bearing of his doctrine on beliefs to which he never refers. Bold and logical minds are thus frequently brought into *conscious* self-variance, having their esoteric and their exoteric professions. Less complete and compact thinkers often remain at the stage of *unconscious* self-variance, and honestly but uneasily believe each doctrine in turn; with Lyell to-day, with Moses to-morrow; Positivist at the Royal Society, and Christian at Westminster Abbey. Such persons have a kind of double consciousness, and pass through two unreconciled lives: their scientific thought proceeds upon one path, their religious conceptions move or stay upon another: they are alternately here and there; but can give no account of the intervening space between their knowledge and their faith, and can rise to no higher point from which both are seen together. Having at different periods passed through different and quite independent developments, they end with two creeds, two orders of taste and affection; and whenever the time comes for border questions to arise, they cross helplessly to and fro,

with the feeble intercession of good-will, but without the common language and intelligence of effective mediation. All this want of inner harmony between faith and knowledge, be it confessed or unconfessed, is the natural result of falsely dividing off the secular and the spiritual, as if they were *different things*, instead of *different thoughts about the same thing;* and so permitting each method to run off indefinitely upon its own abstractions, till neither can find its way back, or look any whole living reality in the face. If Christian theology cannot prevent these evils, still more if it favours and promotes them, it abdicates its intellectual function of universal supervision and reconciliation of human pursuits, and descends to poor antagonisms on the very scene that should lie tranquil under its survey. Indifference and neglect towards new forms of thought and fields of research will bring a most certain retribution, fostering the growth of wild pretensions and "Arab" sciences, that follow their own rule, and remain outlaws and strangers to the realm of reverential reason. No legitimate direction of human activity, speculative or social, ought to be foreign to the sympathy of the Christian divine; and sympathy requires knowledge and insight. His own particular stock of truths may be a very simple series; but the range of their application, and the need of their modifying presence, are nothing less than universal; so that he of all men wants the largest and most generous training, and scarcely completes his qualifications till he is furnished with a key to every compartment of human life and thought.

What, indeed, is true theology? It is the *knowledge of God.* By its very definition, therefore, it must be coextensive with the field of his manifestations, and have something to learn and report wherever his trace has been left. What more need be said to shew its encyclopedic character? For there is no region where he does not make his sign. He is Agent and Disposer in *outward Nature.* He communes with the inmost *individual Soul.* He is the Providence of *collective Humanity,* and unfolds his thought

in the process of history,—both the general history of the race, and the special history of the times and people to whom and through whom he has made himself supernaturally known. And whoever is at a loss where and how to recognize him in these several fields, is, just so far as his perplexity goes, *no theologian.*

In the *first*, we are called upon to find the religious interpretation of the *physical sciences.* To conceive aright the meaning of "Natural Laws;" to determine how they stand related to *His causality;* to reconcile the alleged action of "necessary forces" with the movement and lordship of *His free thought;* to adjudicate between the opposite doctrines of progressive development from low beginnings into improving forms of being, and of creation out of a perfect preconception into an imperfect realization;—these are but a few of the points at which, in the survey of nature, the roads divaricate, and we need a good δαίμων to keep us from divergence into godless wilds. It is a helpless thing for a divine to be unable to cope with such questions, or to present to the mind a picture of the outer world and its history which shall fall into place in the gallery of faith. Socrates describes, in one of Plato's happiest passages of dialogue, the shock his religious feeling experienced when he first read a treatise on animal mechanics and the organism of nature, and found everything explained on mere physical principles and without any reference to an Indwelling Mind. From that day to the present, the same experience has been repeated, and the relations continue uneasy between the natural sciences and religious faith. Socrates was led by it to relinquish physical pursuits, and resort to moral studies in hope of better light; and doubtless he went to the true source for apprehension of divine things. But, once in clear possession of his faith derived thence, he returned with it upon the subjects dark before, and transfigured them with its illumination. How much more should we, who have not our faith to seek in the first instance, resolve to conquer by it the difficulties and

repugnances of natural science, and bid the interpreted sky of Newton, not less than the mysterious Hebrew heavens, declare the glory of God, and the morning stars sing together! The least we can ask from the divine is, that as material studies are perpetually troubling the conceptions of faith with a fatalistic shadow, he should be qualified to shew how little there is any real eclipse, and how completely the darkness is flung by phantasms of imagination. For this purpose he must gain entrance into the interior of the natural sciences, grow familiar with their logical processes, and discriminate between the mere fictions of method and the eternal fact of things.

In the *second* realm of divine manifestation,—the individual soul,—problems still more immediately involved in all Christian teaching urge themselves upon our attention. Need I do more than pronounce the words "Holy Spirit," to indicate the point at which our religion comes into immediate contact with psychology and morals and the whole procedure of reflective self-knowledge? If there be any one characteristic of Christian revelation more assured than all the rest, it is this faith,—that the most intimate relations subsist between the human spirit and the Divine,—that neither sits solitary in respect to the other,—that they do somehow meet upon the same field of consciousness, and in their personal life continually exercise opposing or concurrent or reciprocating action. To conceive aright of this mutual attitude is a prime necessity not only for all speculative thinkers on religious doctrine, but for the hourly experience of every meditative Christian. For a man not to know himself from his God, his Tempter from his Inspirer, is to remain blind to the first conditions of his responsible existence, and close the shutters of his moral reason. It is too late to put men off with vague phrases, once perhaps sufficient for the undeveloped consciousness of believers, but now only raising questions to leave them in the dark. After ages of fermenting doctrine, you cannot go back to the unmixed elements, but must

work forward to the clear and finished product. Does not the central truth on this matter encounter perpetual contradiction at both ends? On the one hand, is not all Divine action in the soul explained away into the self-action of her own laws? And, on the other, is not the free human personality flung into the sweeping tides of Pantheistic power? And shall the Church be able to speak no mediating word? To do so with any effect, her ministers must be furnished with some coherent theory of human nature, and know what they mean when they speak of the Will, the Conscience, the Reason, the Affections;—the promptings of God's spirit and the working of their own. Scarcely can they engage in a single act of prayer, without an *implicit* belief on this whole system of relations; and they cannot, if need be, defend the act as accordant with the highest reason, without rendering their belief *explicit*.

In the *third* field of divine manifestation,—the providential training of the human race,—we encounter the questions which more immediately concern us as believers in historical revelation. *Elsewhere*, we are engaged in settling the conditions and drawing out the essence of *all* religion, and securing it from being lost amid the other and lower activities of our nature. *Here*, we disentangle the essence of the *Christian* religion, by comparing its characteristics, as a divine element in human affairs, with the other means by which God has left his witness in the courses of history. On this side we obtain a correction to the excessive individualism of Protestant piety, sequestering the private mind with God, and abandoning Society and States to the secular expediencies; and are lifted to the higher view which the Catholic theology contains but the Catholic hierarchy corrupts,—that our humanity is one vast organism, at once the object and the medium of a Divine and holy purpose; that the flow of peoples, the consanguinities of language, the order of colonization, the diversities of indigenous genius, the blossoming and fall of literatures, the consolidation and dissolution of polities, are

but modes and pulsations of a continuous Divine Thought, passing through time and giving it greater fulness as it goes. The more reverential spirit which this conception carries into historical studies is so far from impairing, that it incalculably enhances, our spiritual trust in the gospel of Christ. Christianity, as it has come down to us, is in any case the confluence of many currents in our humanity. You cannot detach it, as an insulated divineness, from relations with the surrounding space. It did not fall as a shooting star upon our world; it cannot hang suspended and apart in the air above us; it was a heavenly dawn for which the gliding earth had been long preparing; and it is appointed to shine more and more towards a perfect day. How, then, are we to regard the tributaries that from the first have passed into it from the life and thought of men, —the Hebrew types of conception, the Hellenic elements of speculative faith, the Roman grasp of objective conditions, the Teutonic depth of subjective experience? Are we to fling these out as foreign intrusions, and treat them as *corruptions*, simply because they are *human*? Whoever begins the process of weeding on this principle, will soon find his hand among the deepest roots, and plucking up the fairest flowers, till he scarcely knows his Eden from a fallow-field. But if God lives and acts *through* the human as well as beyond it, then may divine elements enter by that channel as well as by another; and that which flows in from the fields of history is not on that account to be dried off again as an impurity. If between Christianity as a divine revelation and the other types of human thought and character there is not mere antagonism and mutual exclusion, but a prepared and Providential relation, as of mutual supplements in one comprehensive scheme, neither the human nor the superhuman suffers from the alliance, but both acquire a dignity auguster than before. At all events, the Church which it is given us to teach and guide as we best may, is delivered to us from the past, and has again to be delivered by us into the future, as the

depository of an historical religion; and the conditions of our trust cannot be understood and fulfilled without careful study of all its antecedents, its Divine sources and its human vicissitudes. Thus only will its true ideal become clear to us; and we shall acquire the spiritual tact to separate whatever is heterogeneous or accidental, whether in the teachings of others or in hereditary formulas of our own. Historical theology pre-supposes, no doubt, the philosophical and moral, and in that sense is subject to their conditions. But, on the other hand, it constitutes the great field of their application, the text given for their interpretation, the living Kingdom of God, whose laws they proclaim and of which their vaticinations are spoken; and in this sense it is the crown and completion of them all.

If these remarks seem to sweep over too wide a field, and not to assign with sufficient minuteness the proper place to the specific parts of theological discipline, it is because I am chiefly anxious to insist on the *all-comprehensive* character of Christian education. The grand function of pure religion (if I read it right) is to preserve the *wholeness* of our living relations, and penetrate them throughout with the spirit of devout faith; to watch against the encroachment of habits and thoughts out of harmony with it; to decline a mere place as one among many knowledges and tastes, and maintain itself as a spirit among all. If there is any class of Christian teachers free to assume this panoptic position, and bound by their antecedents to aim at the hearty and complete reconciliation of philosophic thought and holy faith, assuredly it is the representatives of a body which has never imposed a creed and never feared a truth. And did we but read the signs of the times with an eye of faithful insight, I believe we should look with a moment's shame at our past negligence, and devote ourselves with life-long hope and courage to do our providential part.

IV.

PLEA FOR BIBLICAL STUDIES AND SOMETHING MORE.*

SINCE we were last assembled in this Hall, an event has occurred which, though remote from the immediate action of this Institution, belongs to its domestic history, and by a sad memorial divides its present from its past. That venerable man whose name has been on the lips of its *alumni* since the first years of the present century, and to whom it owes almost all its theological honours, has laid his burthen down and been called to the Christian's rest.† It is a gentle sorrow with which a life of four-score years and ten, a life full of graces as of time, is seen to fade away; and even by the nearest in affection the farewell, so mercifully delayed, may be said in tones trembling with tenderness rather than with grief. But still, these final partings, soften them as we may, have a significance for us that belongs to nothing else; and those of us who have been pupils of Mr. Wellbeloved would ill deserve the privilege, could we see his name erased from the list of the living without a pause of reverential thought. Permit me, then, before speaking the words required from me as

* Opening of Session, Manchester New College, London. October, 1858.

† Rev. Charles Wellbeloved, Theological Tutor and Head of the College during its York period from 1803 to 1840, died August 29, in the 90th year of his age and the 67th of his ministry in York.

a teacher in this College, to fall back for a moment into the position of a student, to recall the priceless memories of that eager and thirsting time, and once more turn a grateful look to the benignant form now sinking into the shadows of the past. Well do I remember the respectful wonder with which we saw, as our course advanced, vein after vein of various learning modestly opened out; the pride with which we felt that we had a Lightfoot, a Jeremiah Jones, and an Eichhorn all in one, yet no mere theologian after all, but scarcely less a naturalist and an archæologist as well; the impatience with which, out of very homage to his wisdom, we almost resented his impartial love of truth in giving us the most careful epitome of other opinions with scarce the suggestion of his own. Many of us have found the notes taken in his lecture-room our best Cyclopædia of divinity during the first years of our active ministry, when books were forced aside by other claims; and when at last some leisure for independent study has been won, and the entrance of the theological sciences upon new phases has taken us into untried fields, then most of all, if I may generalize my own experience, have we been thankful for our training under a master of the true Lardner type, candid and catholic, simple and thorough, humanly fond indeed of the counsels of peace, but piously serving every bidding of sacred truth. Whatever might become of the particular conclusions which he favoured, he never justified a prejudice; he never misdirected our admiration; he never hurt an innocent feeling or overbore a serious judgment; and he set up within us a standard of Christian scholarship to which it must ever exalt us to aspire. The generation in whom his memory lives is no longer large: but if we are a "*faithful* few," we shall see to it, that his name shall go down among our sacred traditions.

It is an old lament that the men who are found most worthy of enduring veneration often pass without recognition, or in the midst of opposition, through their own

times. This may be true of great Reformers born for conflict, or charged with some unique ideal, and granted to the chief crises of the world. But for periods of tranquil progress, a happier adjustment may be observed between the laws of the single and those of the social mind. Side by side with the slow and steady rate of change which alone can be given to humanity *en masse*, moves the individual thinker, at first with the rapid spring of youthful courage, at last with the quiet steps, the frequent rests, the placid retrospect of age. The sympathies which perhaps he outstrips in the beginning have time to come up with him before the end, and as the seasons chill upon his heart, close round him with warmer appreciation. If for a while he parts from his comrades and has to toil on alone, it is when he is strong to bear it; and when the feet grow weary and the spirit faints, he finds the world all reconciled and dies in peace. The almost patriarchal years of our friend just gone gave him this compensation for so long a time, that it needs an effort to remember that it was not always so. To the younger generation, who have grown familiar with the admitted honours of his name, who have been taught to regard it as a tower of strength to a purely conservative theology, it will scarcely be credible that he had once the repute of unsound and dangerous innovation: but my seniors and companions do not forget the mysterious alarms that invested a certain heresy called "Cappism," not so much actively inculcated as supposed to be esoterically held by our revered and too retiring tutor. Nor did any previous public teacher venture, so far as I know, to withdraw from the system of Christian evidences the argument from Hebrew prediction, and set the Messianic prophecies in the full and exclusive light of contemporary history. Such startling steps of thought could be taken only by one who had courage to contemplate organic changes in theologic science, and whose conscious fidelity could support him in a position almost solitary among his contemporaries and not generally shared even by his

students. The example, from a Christian so humble and a scholar so profound, may well console those who, following him at a vast distance, repeat the same experience in far slighter wanderings from the beaten track.

In fact, so long as there are different rates of mental change for different parts of the same community, there must be *some* in every generation on whom the repute of heterodoxy falls. The grand conservative power in the world is the tenacity of habitual ideas in the great mass of busy men, who have to live upon the store with which they set out on their career. The grand provision for progressive thought is in the studies of men devoted to some special research, or able to follow its course under the conduct of its great masters. Between these two tendencies a certain conflict is inevitable in every age; and is in itself so little to be deprecated that it is the very condition of our escape from a fatal stagnation, and has no other evil in it than it artificially contracts from our infirmities and sins. The student who at all keeps up with the intellectual movement of his time, who is quickened with any living learning instead of being buried with the dead, is carried, by irresistible necessity, to new mental stations, and is compelled to revise his judgments, and recompute his place. But let him not deem it a strange thing that no longer is the dear old world all with him where he stands; that others stay where they are more at home, till he has made their transit to him clear and safe, and the region round him genial and fruitful. There is an element of *faithfulness* in their reluctance which he must recognize and respect. And the burthen which it imposes on him is wholesome to bear: for there is scarcely a better discipline for the lonely thinker than the unwelcome plunge from the silent order of his contemplative world into the ferment of the agora,—than the encounter with the tangle of human feeling and opinion, and the necessity of tracing a way into the light by the circuitous tact of patient sympathy instead of the curt methods of a supercilious logic. This difficulty (I con-

fidently speak for my friend and colleague as for myself) awakens in us no complaint and no despair. As teachers of those who are to guide the next generation, we are indeed bound not to lag behind the standard of our own, —nay, to keep as near as we can to the front ranks of advancing research in our respective fields: did we *not* make this our aim, we should have studied to little purpose the examples of such predecessors as a Wellbeloved and a Kenrick,—should be faithless to the most honourable traditions and distinctive opportunities of our religious body, —and drop out of our natural relation to the Church of the Future. But as our march is still in the same service and in simple allegiance to the same Divine Master,—as the heart of the Past beats strong within us both, and we break with no one guiding faith or reverence, we do not hesitate to claim the old companionship, to expect a generous trust, and to believe that, however scattered for awhile by diversities of track or speed, both the hasting and the lingering feet will be found in the evening, when all is over, resting on the same field.

The problem of this College has always been to reconcile the interests of free learning with the practical training for the Christian ministry. That these two ends should be incompatible, is a suspicion which its supporters have been too noble-minded to indulge. Sympathy with foremost scholarship, and administration of popular religion, they have steadfastly believed might go together and help each other. It is an honourable fact that this faith, combining conditions which in the eye of sceptic fear would appear mutually destructive, has been maintained, not by the will of some eccentric and enthusiastic Founder, imposing a personal fancy on the Institution, but under a form of government singularly open and popular. Where, in the whole range of ecclesiastical history, can we find a parallel case,—that a large body of men, with strong and definite convictions on divine things, have declined, by deliberate verdict, to take any security for the perpetuation of their

own opinions, beyond the constant revision and testing of them by the best attainable instruments of knowledge?—and have further declared it an essential qualification for Christian Preaching that the minister, far from simply echoing the doctrines of an earlier time and becoming the mere organ of his people's state of mind, should be able to speak from a higher position, and prepare the world around him for the next hour that is to strike? A principle so wisely bold cannot fail now and then to be put to a severe trial: and it may be admitted that precisely the present stage of theological knowledge is especially critical for it. That it will be found equal to the utmost strain which will be put upon it, I do not for a moment doubt; provided we are prepared, with suitable pliancy, to accept the altered conditions of our time. Now that a generation has visibly passed away, it may not be unseasonable to note and register the most essential changes in the aspect of our educational problem, and compute their bearing on the right classification and apportionment of studies.

The impulse given by the Reformation to clerical erudition is mainly due, I need hardly say, to the new position into which the Scriptures were then raised. At the earliest stage of the revolt from Rome, resistance was confined to the comparatively recent Dominican abuses, without disturbance to the authority of the Church, expressed in its older councils and the writings of the Fathers. It was so embarrassing a task, however, to defend the validity of an arbitrary chronological limit, that the line was inevitably pushed further and further back, till nothing was left behind it but the Sacred Writings and the Apostolic Age: and *there* at last Protestantism took its stand: there alone was the Word of God, to the test of which every question of belief and duty must be brought. The Scriptures thus succeeded to the place previously held by the Creeds and dogmatic Decrees of the Christian hierarchy; and were required to discharge the same function, and be ready with an answer to whatever doubts were brought to them. It

was impossible to consult them with such an object, without instantly feeling how different they are from the short, sharp, systematic definitions in which the Church had pronounced her judgment and handed it down ready-made; how much harder it is to win a response from them; over how wide a field of history and law, of poetry and prophecy, of proverb and epistle, the divine truth is distributed,—and that, too, not with the mechanical order and precision of the Letter, but with the trackless freedom of the Spirit. A cold and critical age would have been thrown into despair by the difficulty of using such a collection as the Bible in substitute for the compendia and canons of the Church; but at a time when the Book of books had freshly opened the deepest fountains of men's hearts, it was invoked for every purpose, and the difficulties it brought were as nothing before the energy which it kindled. More than once it was some happy moment of contact with the unspoiled phrase of Holy Writ, that had dissipated the darkest clouds of Luther's own mind: and he himself describes the sudden light of joy that flashed upon him, when in place of the "*pœnitentia*" of the Roman Church (reduced to an outward "*penance*" of expiation) the Greek μετάνοια carried its pure meaning to his heart, of an inward and spiritual change. The whole religion, which had become worn down to an arid dust by the grinding of the Latin routine, broke into freshness again and sprinkled its very soul upon the Reformers, when opening upon them through its native speech. An insatiable thirst carried them to the well-spring of the untranslated word, and gave a charm to the severest grammatical labours that promised to bring them a step nearer to their place of rest. The incredible difficulties through which Reuchlin struggled into a mastery of the Hebrew, and sent forth Melancthon to propagate the "new learning," by his personal instructions at Wittenberg and by the publication of Greek and Hebrew manuals, the rapidity with which an immense apparatus of Biblical studies was created, the marvellous approach to exactitude

which the new philology attained, may well fill us with admiration, and reproach our more effeminate and less modest scholarship. The zeal for learning derived all its inspiration from a religious source,—the desire and need of conversing with the original oracles of God. The Reformers, having refused to bind themselves by the recognized decisions of the Church, had to begin again the organization of dogma and ritual; and for that end to make themselves and their clergy masters of the sacred materials out of which the structure must be raised. The education for the Christian ministry was thus suddenly expanded, from the narrow drill of a few half ecclesiastical, half Aristotelian manuals, to the dimensions of the whole Bible in its own languages. True it is, that when once the new symbolical books were produced and invested with authority, a partial return to the old intellectual apathy ensued; the work was considered to be done; the essence of Holy Writ to have been extracted; and the future was closed against the excitement of discovery. In the Lutheran Church, where the authority of the new Confessions was most stringently imposed, this paralysing reaction was powerfully felt. In those of the Genevan type, however rigid the inward organism of their vast logical system, there was less outward restraint upon a free development, and a wider exposure to varieties of national temperament: and accordingly they remained far truer to their original Scripturalism, and continued to produce a Biblical literature, and to maintain among the people the habit of reading the Bible, when the Saxon churches had in these respects become degenerate. Where the function of secondary Creeds was at the lowest, the continued need of the primitive Scripture was at the highest. Hence, what is true of the Calvinists in general as compared with the Lutherans, holds of the English Presbyterians in particular as compared with other branches of the Swiss stock. The trials of conscience through which they passed in the latter half of the seventeenth century having brought them to peculiar sensitive-

ness on the subject of subscription, they fell back with all the more absolute repose on Scripture. They were not content with its use by a Church as a source of doctrines to be thence imposed, in second-hand epitomes, on the members one by one; but required that it should be left to stand alone, in separate and first-hand contact with each individual believer's mind, and be permitted to speak for itself. This was the freedom, not (if I may say so) a freedom *from* Scripture, but a freedom *to* Scripture, on which our forerunners so strenuously insisted. In its original idea it undoubtedly involved the most absolute and infallible authority for every part of the letter of the Bible; a belief which in 1648 had even embodied itself in a penal law, visiting with the punishment of death any one who should call in question the authenticity of any book of either the Old or the New Testament. This belief it was which became stereotyped in the phrases, "*the Sufficiency of Scripture*," and "*the Scriptures the rule of faith and practice:*" the former expressing only its negative side, excluding all that lay beyond the Scriptures: the latter expressing the positive side, admitting all that lay within them. Taken together, they turn the key upon you with the sharpest precision, and shut you up in the most rigorous logical incarceration. If you believe any moral or spiritual truth on extra-biblical grounds, you cannot use the first: if you hesitate about any proposition whatsoever in the Bible, you cannot use the second. The effect of the two is to present the Scriptures, the whole Scriptures, and nothing but the Scriptures, as the depositories of divine truth; and to concentrate the qualifications of the Christian ministry upon one point—*the exposition of these oracles of Heaven.* Enable him to find their meaning and to express it clearly to others, and his work as an ambassador of God is done.

Such was the theory which occasioned the demand for a learned ministry, and gave their constitution and usages to the Nonconformist academies. The organization of studies

which would shape itself around this determining idea it is not difficult to trace.

(1.) The first thing must be to effect the necessary insulation of the Scriptures, and detach them, by marks of exclusive divineness, from the mass of human literature: and this accordingly was the aim of all investigations into the Jewish and Christian CANON, with the external history of the several books.

(2.) Next, the line being drawn which excludes all human writings and encloses all divine, precaution must be taken against any interior adulteration of the latter, impairing their absolute identity: the purity of their TEXT must be tried by every available criterion, and emendation, systematized into an art, be applied to every remediable blemish; and hence the vast *Apparatus Criticus* which has been accumulated, and the mere description of which forms so considerable a part of the work of a Theological Professor.

(3.) Lastly, the books being at length as perfect as may be in our hands, it is time to read and understand them: resorting, for that purpose, not only to all available philological aids, but to the illustrative help of History and Antiquities, the reciprocal lights of comparable passages, and the whole scheme of EXEGETICAL resource. In accomplishing this final part of the work, the teacher's method is altogether at the mercy of the hypothesis respecting Scripture which he carries into it. Does he assume the whole to be alike the word of God? then he levels all its varieties as unessential, and, treating it as throughout the expression of *One* unerring Mind, takes it as homogeneous and absolutely self-consistent in every part; and, for elucidation of obscurities in fact or doctrine, overleaps the lines of time and authorship, and applies the same standard to the whole. Hence the Interpreter passes into the HARMONIST: who undertakes to weave apparently discrepant narratives into one continuous history, and to construct apparently successive beliefs into one system of absolute truth.

This then is the series of studies on which it has become traditional in our Academies to throw the stress of the Theologic work: Establishment of the Canon,—critical History and Emendation of the Text,—Interpretation of the Language,—Harmonizing of the Matter. A proficient in these, it was thought, had mastered his stewardship of the word; and as there was "sufficiency" in the "Scriptures," so was there in the Education which gave him possession of them. Whatever you might superadd to these was to be regarded as subsidiary; expedient perhaps for secular ornament and scholarly repute, but not indispensable to the furniture of the Christian divine. In concession, however, to these less imperative claims, the main acts of theological education were introduced by a philosophical Prologue, and followed by an historical Epilogue. *Before* entering the proper sphere of his Biblical pursuits, the student was invited to survey the truths of Natural Religion and the doctrines of the Heathen World. And *after* emerging from his sacred studies, he was conducted through the chief periods of Ecclesiastical History and controversy. These, however, were kept in a kind of subordination to the intermediate work which affected not only their extent, but their spirit: they were mere human wings of a Divine centre, and were oppressed and quenched by the light that towered above them; and were chiefly looked at, accordingly, as foils to set off the ideal glory they embraced. The religions of Nature and the Heathen world were reviewed chiefly with intent to prove the "need of a Revelation;" and the History of the Church was read with the preconception of a model purity and unity in the apostolic age, from which it was one protracted decline into corruption. Where the præ-christian ages of the world are cited to prove how little man can find the truth, and the post-christian how little he can keep it, they are inevitably examined chiefly on their negative side, and it is vain to expect any genial historical appreciation. The whole tendency of this intellectual point of view is to draw into one absolute focus

all the divineness of our human world; to concentrate attention upon it as the only glory; and to glance at the life on either side only to expose the depth of its darkness or the worthlessness of its light. We cannot wonder at the narrow and slighting estimate, long inherited from Puritanism, of all except Biblical studies; for to speak of the "*sufficiency* of Scripture," what is it but to pronounce all else *superfluous?*

Many concessions in detail have long been made to more comprehensive ideas, not only in our own Institution, but in others where they might be less expected. But they have entered incidentally under the plea and on the side of secular knowledge, without affecting the main program as originally conceived; which still probably holds its ground, on the tenure of unrevised habit, in many minds no longer possessed by its fundamental principle. A desire yet lingers to keep both philosophy and history at a distance and in a merely ancillary position,—to prevent their mixing themselves with proper theology,—to preserve the separate integrity of Biblical studies as having an organism of their own, and to make the interpretation of the sacred records the final act of the student's career. If the meaning of those writings, once ascertained, is really held to be decisive and without appeal on every matter of which they speak, nothing can be more natural than this desire. I recently heard it most consistently expressed from the pulpit of a neighbouring cathedral by one of the most eminent of our living divines, who laid down the following positions:* that our Lord by reading out of the prophet Isaiah in the synagogue of Nazareth, demonstrated for us the infallible inspiration of the Old Testament: that the commission and powers he gave to his apostles assure us, directly or indirectly, of the infallibility of all the New: that we are bound to trust this testimony of his and all that it carries with it, let appearances be what they may: that if the

* The cathedral was Westminster Abbey; the divine, Rev. Dr. Wordsworth.

naturalist, the astronomer, the geologist, the investigator of primæval history, are staggered by the picture of nature and the spread of nations in the book of Genesis, or by the reported miracles of Joshua and Jonah, they have nothing to do but unreservedly submit their human knowledge to the higher certainty of the Divine Word : that if our moral sense revolts from any sentiment or act sanctioned by a sacred writer, we must conform our conscience to his : that demoniacal possession is a divinely authenticated fact which no pretended law of nature is to be permitted to dispute : that we are to dismiss as optical illusions of our own minds every apparent discrepancy of reported fact or error of expectation : that Philosophy and Criticism have no office within Holy Writ except to remove its difficulties and establish its harmony, assuming all its propositions to be unconditionally true. In this view, certainly there can be nothing ulterior to the question, "What saith the Word?"

From this position, however, we have been gradually but irresistibly borne away. Within the last generation, Natural Science, Comparative Philology, Historical Criticism, have compelled a revision of many judgments previously unchallenged by the boldest divines. When the first part of Mr. Wellbeloved's Translation of the Bible was published, it was as yet too early to disturb the traditions of the origin of mankind from a single pair, of the universal Deluge, of the dispersion of races, and original unity of language. Geologists were adducing fossil evidence of the flood : and in our College class-rooms, where the teaching was never behind the highest standard of the day, proofs were still adduced of the soundness of the Mosaic chronology of the human race. Need I do more than name Mr. Kenrick's admirable "Essay on Primæval History," in order to furnish a landmark for the tides of opinion, and measure the amount of change? Nor is it more possible, within the limits of the Christian records, longer to take our stand on the absolutism of the letter. A recent pamphlet by a

member of the Church of England,*—a pamphlet written in a spirit not less reverential than intelligent,—enumerates some of the chief results of modern criticism, in order to rouse attention to the new exigencies of theology, and saves me the necessity of any statement of my own. He reminds us that we must recognize an ascending progress of the Hebrew religion, traceable throughout its records, taking a new and sublimer start from the Advent of Christ, visibly proceeding still through the Apostolic age, and probably not to be arrested to the end of time: that the Evangelical narratives cannot be received as infallible records of fact or of discourse, in the face of the lesser discrepancies among the Synoptical Gospels and the greater between them and the remaining Gospel: that the "Apostolic Epistles are not free from errors" of expectation, of interpretation, and of reasoning: and, above all, that among the New-Testament writers are found not simply different personal characteristics in their expression of the same faith, but types of doctrine materially different respecting the person and work of Christ, and the scope and conditions of his religion. These things, stated by a lay member of one of the most stationary of Christian churches, may perhaps receive the attention they require, as by no means the speculations of a few extreme theologians, but the well-established results of the most sober and conservative criticism that retains any pretension to *be* criticism at all. As if to prepare for this new era, we have long accustomed ourselves to an alteration in our traditional phraseology; speaking of Scripture not as "*the rule* of faith and practice," but as "*containing* a record of divine Revelation,"—not necessarily therefore to the exclusion of other things.

Consider then what is involved in this change. If divine and human elements lie mixed in Scripture, mere textual interpretation cannot ensure to us the pure object of our

* "Free Theological Inquiry the Duty of the Laity." By a Lay Member of the Church of England. Williams and Norgate. London. 1858.

quest, and be the final act of our work: there is yet an ulterior discrimination to be effected before the Sacred Truth stands clear. It is not enough to reach the meaning of the words: the critique, if it is to yield any guiding result, must advance into the thought itself, and draw forth the imperishable essence from the transitory accidents. The end towards which all Christian theology presses forward is still the same, the Person of Jesus Christ, as the organ of Divine manifestation in our Humanity: but which is the true view of his Person?—that of Matthew? that of Paul? or that of John? Are we to find the essence of his religion in the humanities of the parables and the ethical depth of the Sermon on the Mount, or in the mystic spirituality of the discourses in the fourth Gospel? These, with a host of similar questions, remain over for reply, after the Interpreter has removed the last obscurity and given us all that the writers meant. We need him as much as ever: we can dispense with no part of the system of Biblical studies which closed with him: but when he has played his part, the curtain must not yet drop; for he leaves us in the very crisis of suspense, with the knot of the whole matter still unresolved. The Scriptures which he has unfolded to us *contain* indeed what is authoritatively above us, and is given for the homage of natures better than our best; but also what we have left behind us, and cannot without deterioration mistake for the permanently holy and divine. They open in the future a heavenly promise everlastingly true to the human mind and heart; but they mingle with it anticipations which have already missed their realization. To exhibit this mixture and then *leave* the matter there,—still more to oscillate evasively between the old high ground of scriptural finality and the liberal concessions which utterly undermine it, is to make express provision for doubt and uncertainty, by stopping short of the clearness of knowledge and the firmness of faith. Something more is needed, if we are not to trifle with the problem of problems, and make no attempt to relieve the divine and indestructible

truth from its human and perishable associations. A critique must be found for the Matter of Scripture, in addition to the interpretation of its Words.

Is this then a thing impossible or presumptuous? It has not proved so in the case of the Mosaic Cosmogony, which has yielded to the advance of the Natural Sciences, leaving with us its sublime Theism unharmed: or in the case of the Israelite atrocities, which our Moral Sense has learned to charge on the passions of an unreclaimed humanity instead of the inspiration of approving Heaven: or in the case of the doctrine of the Logos, to which, though it tinctures the whole meaning of our deepest gospel and penetrates the very words of Christ, we are able to assign a human growth by clear and intelligible steps. In these palpable and admitted examples, what are the instruments of our critique, which we apply as criteria to the very substance of the sacred writings? They are—the Sciences of Nature, the verdicts of Conscience, the indications of History: and if we press our question further, and ask, not about the *origin*, but about the *inherent truth* of the doctrine of the Logos, we have to seek all the grounds of the discussion in the speculative Metaphysics of religion. In other words, each kind of matter laid before us in Scripture comes into the court of the faculty proper for its appreciation, and affects us differently according as it is in harmony or discord with the essential conditions of intellectual, moral, and spiritual response. But these essential conditions are defined in two ways: by *historical* investigation, so far as they are inductively gathered from the phenomena and analogies of human experience: by *philosophical* research, so far as their traces lie in the inner constitution and limits of human nature. It is determined, therefore, by the very nature of things, which no arbitrary choice can alter, that historical and philosophical knowledge has a regulative function with respect to the theology of the letter; and that the conception of an *unconditional* Biblical theology cannot be realized. And no organization of studies can be so truly conservative

as one which, attempting no strain upon facts as they arise, shapes itself in sympathy with the real and natural springs of faith and self-devotion.

If with the Divine element of Scripture we are brought, in the present day, more freely to recognize the human ; on the other hand, from the human world beyond the range of Scripture we are less eager to exclude the Divine. The fatal assumption that Heathendom and the first Christendom were opposed to one another as unguided Reason and unmixed Revelation, as bare Nature and exclusive Grace, —precluded formerly more than a timid and reluctant sympathy with the true and noble elements of Pagan life. I well remember (perhaps it is only a personal confession which I make) the half-guilty feeling with which, in young and fervent days, I found myself surprised into passionate admiration by the story of Socrates, and taken captive by words that seemed to me of unspeakable religious depth in Plato, or even in Cicero and Seneca. I accused myself of an unchristian perversity,—a want of evangelical simplicity and humbleness,—because often Greek and Roman history stirred the tides within me more than the image of Galilean apostles, — because the struggle for Hellenic freedom appeared more sacred than the conquest of idolatrous Canaan, and Leonidas nobler than Gideon,—because, read what I might in favour of a general resurrection in the body, the Phædon tempted me to hope rather for the immortality of the soul. Every beauty and good that fastened wonder or reverence on a world reputed alien from God, was felt to detract from the glories of his chosen sphere, and to weaken that contrast between a profane and a sacred realm on which everything was staked. The time is surely come when these artificial anxieties may disappear. It would be a strange gospel,—we now acknowledge,—that should find its interest and support in disparaging any gleams of truth and goodness in the life of men ; and a poor sign of the Holiest Spirit, that it should have no sympathy for what is kindred to itself and springs from the very depths within us

where it loves to dwell. The difference between the Christian and the Heathen we can no longer imagine to be, that the one *has*, and the other has not, the Divine guide; but rather that the one *knows* Him, while the other does not, —a difference which does not hinder the *unconscious* grace from being often intenser and higher than the *conscious*. And so, the bondage is taken from our hearts: with the more thoughful of the early Fathers of the church, we can give a joyful recognition to God's ever-living Spirit in our humanity wherever it ripens any fruit; even should it look as fair in Attica or Latium as in Antioch or Alexandria. His preparing Presence with *both* the great races of the ancient spiritual world,—the Hellenic and the Hebrew,—with philosophers as with prophets, — is so far from diminishing that it rather doubles the magnitude of Christ's function: making him truly "the desire of *all* nations:" the supernatural focus towards which the separated paths of rays converged and in which they blended: his Personality embodying the whole essence of their truth and good: his self-sacrificing Death dropping whatever was instrumental and temporary: and his Risen Life lifting a perfected humanity into an object of eternal aspiration.

The general result of the whole survey is this: that while, on the one hand, Historical Criticism has to take the place of mechanical Harmonizing, and along with Moral and Philosophical principles of appreciation to enter the interior of Scripture; on the other, a consecration passes out upon knowledge once "profane," and draws all history into the drama of Divine Revelation. There is no tendency whatever in the present stage of theology to abate anything of the old thoroughness of Biblical studies; but there is an imperative need to take them up as part of a wider system and bring them into more genial relations with the whole circle of mental culture, and especially with the other modes by which human thought seeks an apprehension of the Divine.

What now is to be the fruit of all our pains and toil?

Be they ever so successful, we look for only a very simple, yet surely not a trivial result. When all is done, we hope to surrender back the student's mind to the pure and child-like trusts, the self-forgetting love, the joyful zeal, which, in proportion as his call is real, dedicated him to this service at first. But then, it is one thing to have these elementary pieties as native impulses, untouched by thought, untempted by sophistic contradiction, and with no tenure but momentary occupation. It is quite another, to hold them by firm anchorage on their conscious grounds; to know all their bearings; to have put the strain on all that is least strong in them, and believe them still; to be ready, not only for their unhesitating utterance, but for their deliberate and comprehensive defence; and to place at the disposal of their power, not a raw undisciplined nature, but a mind rich in the long heritage of human thought, and deep in experience of its own. I do not deny the greatness of even blind affection turned on truly heavenly things, or the contagion of its mighty fervour; but though it may be better to have blind leaders of the blind than that all should go astray, yet it is the glory of Christian guidance that it demands open-eyed vision, and seeks God in the day-light of reality, not within the closed lids of ignorance or of ecstacy. I am aware it is sometimes said, that too much learning dries up the inner springs of spiritual life, or drains them off into some mere intellectual receptacle: and it is an old way of explaining the want of glow in an educated preacher, to suppose that his books have damped out his native fire. If any one will show me a single instance in which an original enthusiasm has been quenched by culture, and one who might have been the prophet has turned into the pedant, I will listen to the plea. The fervours of an early piety I have seen die down for want of the ventilating winds of labour and of prayer; or lie as spent ashes on the hearth of a nature grown selfish; or thickened into the smoke of party-passion and fanatic fear: but never dimmed, like mere watch-fires

of the night, by any rising dawn or spreading horizon of the mind. Preaching, where it is not a routine or a pretence, (perhaps likewise where it *is*), is eminently an expression of the *whole* man: Religion spares no part of him, any more than God omits himself from here or there in the universe of life: the larger therefore his faculties and the wider his range of insight and sympathy, the more numerous are the keys on which the Divine touch may strike, and the fuller the chords through which the Word will peal. And if, under the practical difficulties of our problem, *we* cannot expect, any more than other bodies of Christians, to escape our proportion of temperaments too quiet for their work, still, even at the worst we can suppose, who can deny that, among dry men also, the educated is more tolerable than the dunce? He will at least teach you something, though he may not stir you; and by preserving the alliance of the religion of Christ with cultivated sense and pure taste and moral worth, save it from every taint of degradation.

While it is our united and earnest desire to send forth effective preachers, as well as faithful representatives, of Christ's holy gospel, and while we shrink from none of the fair responsibilities of our trust, we would deprecate a weak dependence on the resources of *any* mere teaching or discipline in this respect. The limit is soon reached beyond which training for the pulpit cannot go. The function of such training is simply critical, not dynamic; it can restrain, correct, and purify; it cannot empower and inspire. It may free the inner feeling from some of the stiffness of its outward instrument, and help it to a more pliant medium of expression; but that inward spring itself, on which all but the whole depends, is beyond *our* world, and remains with the grace of God and the fidelity of the private conscience. The discipline of life, which makes the student *forget* himself, will do more than all our instructions that oblige him to *study* himself. When the growth of faith and affection within is strong enough to

burst and fling away the husk of selfish fear, it is surprising how the powers of expression expand, and hang out unexpected leaves and blossoms to the light. Only the warmth of a living experience is adequate to this: contact with sorrowful realities; occasions of genial sympathy and strenuous duty; a transition from the communion of silent ideas to the many-toned voices of humanity. So far as this discipline is opened by labours in the Mission-house and the School, our students have ever shown themselves spontaneously eager to embrace it. So long as they continue to do their part in keeping the just balance between the critical exercises of the lecture-room and the practical activities of religious faith and love, we shall not despair of realizing the hopes of our churches; and for ourselves, of leaving behind the monument most worthy of a Christian ambition,—a generation of successors greater in every spiritual dimension than ourselves.

V.

FACTORS OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH IN MODERN SOCIETY.*

In entering upon a new term of academic work, our thought and feeling spontaneously look forward, and a fresh spring of hope urges us into a welcome future. A natural light of joy rests upon every open opportunity: clear as yet from the shadow of disappointment or unfaithfulness, it awakens in the young the thirst for an untried experience; in the good, the zeal for unspoiled duty; and even in the ripest age, the irrepressible faith that the errors of the past may be repaired, and every worthy conception pressed nearer to its accomplishment. Yet, while sharing to the full the thankful and elastic spirit of such a time, I cannot pass the threshold of this Anniversary without remembering the various experiences from which we meet upon it here, and which, unless vicissitude is to go without its wisdom, may well give a deeper and more earnest tone to our joint pursuits. To not a few of us the colouring of life has been changed and mellowed otherwise than by the lapse of months; and the studies awaiting us are guarded by gentle images of sorrow or sobered hopes of joy. And while our ranks, which, ere we parted, sickness had so thinned, are now happily filled in and even recruited with unusual force, we have but to look back over the year to see how large a promise for the future is needed, to compensate the public losses of the past. Since our last open-

* Opening of Session, Manchester New College, London. October, 1860.

ing day many a faithful labourer, whose name was as a household word among us, has laid his burthen and his honours down: the broad popular eloquence of George Harris has handed over its marvels to tradition; the pure simplicity, the assiduous fidelity, the apostolic piety of Benjamin Carpenter are lost to us, except in the healthy fruits with which they covered his field of toil; and, in more direct bereavement of our *Alma Mater*, the voice has been silenced of one of her eldest and dearest sons;—a voice so sweet and tender, so charged with gracious wisdom, so full-toned in its humanity, so trustful in its devotion, that to those who had felt its power, the name of Joseph Hutton must for ever represent the very soul of Pity, Charity, and Faith. And if, in reckoning up the buried treasures of the year, we suffer the natural affinities of love and admiration to carry us beyond the rigid lines of country or of system, how can we forget that sad Florentine grave which has quenched the light of so much nobleness? or help feeling that, in the loss of Theodore Parker, the nerve of natural piety, the arm of righteous reform, the courage of every generous hope, are enfeebled not for his world alone but for ours too? In days like ours, when religious faith has lost its hold alike of the base and of the intellectual summit of society, when the life of the hour has grown foreign to the creeds of ancient centuries, and free access to men's hearts is choked by a barricade of ecclesiastical traditions,—days of temporizing in the Church and of egotism in sects,—when theology wins its mental emancipation by moral casuistry, and Christian zeal borrows its inspiration from party policy, we can ill spare any one of those guileless and unselfish agencies. But let us not repine at the successive transmission of God's trust: let us rather take up the dropped torch of their fidelity, that it may pass from hand to hand, and, fed with a purer oil within each spirit, may shed a brighter light and a more generous warmth from age to age.

The Institution whose work we resume to-day provides

for the full Academic training of a permanent succession of Nonconformist Ministers. Its very design, therefore, assumes the perpetual need in Christian society of religious guides and instructors; the natural relation of their work to the whole circle of human knowledge; and the possibility of a Scientific Theology where there is no bespoken conformity. To these principles, and to the high estimate which they imply of the Christian preacher's office, we firmly adhere, in the face of social discouragement and of philosophical disparagement. The accomplished Historian of English Civilization propounds, indeed, a law which, if it were established, would put the mark of impotency and degradation on all such aims and labours as engage us here.* The improvement of mankind, he tells us, is due entirely, under similar physical conditions, to *Intellectual* discovery, and is absolutely unaffected by *Moral and Religious* causes: while the Arts and sciences are "*cumulative*" and put themselves out to interest from age to age, greatness of character and purity of faith are but the talent in the napkin, incapable of increase. The virtues and the crimes cancel each other. The hero and the saint are balanced by the traitor and the libertine, and leave no residuary product for the world's heritage: the good and evil, after temporary struggle, are alike absorbed, and the permanent half-tide of human nature stands ever at the same level. In spite of the seeming freedom and sublime anticipations of conscience, the actions of mankind are necessitated in their origin and impotent in their results. Nay, it does not satisfy this theory to say that moral and religious truth, from their stationary character, are indifferent to the progress of our race; they exist, it would seem, chiefly in order to be denied; and though inoperative in themselves, they become negatively beneficent when they stimulate the intellect to contradiction, and introduce one of those ages of scepticism which are the

* "History of Civilization in England." By Henry Thomas Buckle. Vol. I.

highest landmarks of civilization. These paradoxes could not have been more damping to the enthusiasm of the Christian student and disciple, had they been expressly designed for his humiliation. Are they true? Then, in dedicating himself to moral and religious labour, he is addressing the human weakness instead of evolving the divine strength of our nature, and missing the real hope and glory of the world in ineffectual dreams of a "kingdom of heaven." Are they true? Then, in trusting the inner voices of his humanity as the primary tones of an ethical and spiritual philosophy, to be first revealed in their interpretation and then verified by appeal to a wider consciousness, he is but chasing his own echoes and fancying them the music of the spheres. Are they true? Then, in studying the Religions of the Past, he is studying not the living power, but only the dead sign, of its stage of growth: the sacred literature which records the communings between the human and the Divine mind, and marks the ascending course of faith and aspiration; the poetry which embodies the ideal admirations of mankind; the laws and manners which betray their sense of moral right; the memorials of doctrinal struggle and speculative belief,—the Dialogues of Plato, the Confessions of Augustine, the Thoughts of Pascal; all that most draws the Christian scholar and best assuages his reverential thirst,—must be held of no account and eliminated from the dynamics of history. The only grand result of a true survey of the Past is, that it yields huge averages which swallow up the hopes of individual effort, and drown the whispered appeals to men's hearts, taken one by one.

This doctrine is the newest form of that old Nightmare of Necessity which always returns to sit upon the breast of every age whose spiritual powers are asleep. As often happens with such spectres of the mind, it has an outline shape of truth; but it is empty, and the weight that seems so oppressive is a delusion, which a spring of effort or a start of feeling will suffice to dissipate. There is certainly

a sense in which the distinction may be justly drawn between the intellectual part of our nature as progressive, and the rest as constant. There is no assignable limit to the new apprehensions of truth which we may gain; while from new forms of feeling and of will,—new, that is, to our humanity,—we are no doubt precluded. It is always possible to discover an unsuspected law, to bring to light a latent class of facts or relations; but not to invent a novel passion or open a hidden field of obligation. The human reason accordingly, however uniform in its constitution through all time, has a history of its own by which it traces its course from age to age, and so multiplies its aspects as almost to disguise its self-identity: the natural science of one century may be obsolete in another; and Thales, Paracelsus, and Faraday, could we bring them together, would be mutually unintelligible. The springs of action and affection, on the other hand, are immortal and unchangeable: the love and hate, the terror, the pity, the sorrow, the crime, that are woven into the epic and drama of a remote antiquity have their fibres still thrilling in the heart of to-day; the same deeds kindle us to scorn or admiration; the same incidents startle our laughter or our tears; and Homer and Sophocles, Shakspere and Schiller, could they speak together, would find their separate tones flow into a common harmony. It is precisely this persistency in the fundamental bases of our nature that gives to literature its unwithering charm, and that binds in one great kindred the distant ages which the inequalities of science would estrange. So far, then, we can go with Mr. Buckle; we unreservedly allow that, while the movement of our humanity is chiefly traceable in shifting lines of knowledge, its essential uniformity is most strikingly evinced by the inextinguishable force of the same passions, conscience and reverence.

But are we on this account to say, that the intellect which is thus impelled to advance is also the impelling power? that, if it were there alone, its step would be as

swift and strong? that the other elements of our nature might abate or increase, sleep or wake, combine or clash as they will, without affecting its competency as the agent of civilization? Far from it. The cognitive capacities of man stir only at the bidding of his affective and voluntary faculties: did his wants never quicken his perception, did his resentments never plunge him into strife, did his pity never press against his resources, did his wonder never set up its fermentation in his thought, his rational existence would remain a mere dormant possibility. The whole dynamics of his life lie in his spontaneous impulses, his regulative morals, his religious sentiments; these it is that work his understanding, dictating its ambition, determining its direction, sustaining its perseverance: and the historian who disregards their condition in order to take account of the arts and sciences alone, is like the meteorologist who should observe only the clouds, and discharge from his reckoning the winds that blow them. Call them, if you please, unprogressive in themselves, they are at least the conditions of all progress,—the constants of our human world that are the base of all its variables,—the conservative elements which give the continuity to times and nations, and out of relation to which the contrasted phenomena of change and revolution cannot be understood. As the political life of a people results from the ever-swaying balance of a principle of order on the one hand and of movement on the other, and can never be interpreted under severance of the two, so the civilization of the world is produced by imperishable affections operating under mutable conditions, and, when described without reference to both, becomes the subject of a mere party history.

The stationary aspect attributed to the moral elements of life is not insisted on in so strict a sense as to exclude the ebb and flow of character. Fluctuations are acknowledged, but are said to cancel one another and be without aggregate effect; and the course of intellectual improvement is supposed to go on independently and undisturbed through

the neap tide and the flood of good and evil. Surely such assumption overlooks the prime conditions of all mental action. Does it, then, make no difference to the Thought from what source the Thinker's inspiration comes,—whether from the passions of a bad heart, or the love and wonder of the good? or whether he is torn in self-conflict, or brings to his meditations the unbroken force of an harmonious nature? Are there no states of the Will which drain off the whole intellectual force, or turn it into a morbid instrument of delusion? Had moral causes nothing to do with the rise, and nothing with the decay, of the Hellenic and the Roman civilization? Why, then, did the Athens of Pericles sink, with all its accumulated accomplishments, philosophy and art, to the Athens of Herodes Atticus? and the city of the Scipios descend to deify a Domitian and a Caracalla? It was at the awakening call of national danger that these great peoples consolidated their social union, and becoming ennobled by the discipline of sacrifice and rich in the traditions of virtue, earned for themselves the materials, the energy, the security, for intellectual advance. And it was when the springs of the common faith and life were first weakened by dissensions and then broken by overwhelming military power, when private selfishness and licence, under the shadow of public servitude, had assumed the monstrous forms attested by Polybius and denounced by Juvenal, that not only the mental power of the Present became enervated, but the very genius and science of the Past seemed to vivify and bless no more. Were the hoarded capital of thought and knowledge the true measure and force of human progress, the Alexandria of the Ptolemies should rank higher than the young Greece whose affluence she gathered and appropriated: yet with what barren result were the rock-streams of Helikon and Parnes diverted to the sands and swamps of a mere observant nature! The whole history of Roman decline is but a protracted proof of the irreversible dependence of social civilization on moral vitality.

Paganism, on the one hand, heir of all the culture of the past, entrenched in every stronghold of the earth, commanding boundless material power and the more formidable armoury of opinion and of scorn, dignified by countless traditions of heroism and devotion, and secured alike in the interests of the great, the tastes of the learned, and the passions of the people, was nevertheless unable to hold its own; the concentrated intellect and resource of the world wasted away from it through a mysterious inner dearth; and with its lips of proud and delicate speech, with its eye still brilliant and its brow still clear, it pined with phthisis at the heart, till the ivory sceptre dropped from its hand. And, conversely, Christianity, without a favouring alliance in the present or the past, rude in utterance, provincial in garb, inexpert in thought, passes from city to city, noiselessly lifting the latch of private life, and after a word or two entertained as an angel that had entered unawares; and soon, through no other power than that of a new trust and the simple surprise of a divine love, it takes up whatever Heathendom was laying down, stops with a breath of purity the decay and desolation of the world, and begins from inward centres that social organism which was to substitute for universal empire an indivisible humanity. The civilization which Intellect could not avail to keep, it was reserved for Faith to win.

There is a marked difference, however, which I am quite willing to admit, between intellectual and moral force in their mode of transmission and their liability to waste and die. Knowledge, by its very nature, grows in *extent;* character in *depth:* and hence the former is certainly "*cumulative*" according to a method not predicable of the latter. Truth, once discovered, may be put on record, together with the evidence revealing it; or may be embodied in some instrument and method of art, whose rationale it supplies; and, in either case, it is thenceforth disengaged from all dependence on its discoverer and becomes the impersonal heritage of mankind. Bradley's

paper on the aberration of light, Fourier's researches with regard to heat, placed certain natural laws within human cognizance, though no duplicates of their authors' genius and skill ever should appear. The air-pump incorporates the fact of atmospheric weight, the prism the law of refraction, the stereoscope the conditions of solid vision, though the existence of Otto Guericke and Snell and Wheatstone were unparalleled or forgotten. The positions thus secured by the investigations of one age serve as the point of departure for the industry of the next; Kepler's laws for the celestial physics of Newton, the discoveries of Lavoisier and Davy for the researches of Liebig, the observations of Galileo and Huygens for the instrument of Foucault. By such perpetual conversion of the *quæsita* of a prior period into the *data* of a posterior, death seems to become indifferent to science; and amid the fall of generations the intellect of mankind remains apparently immortal. To this, it must be admitted, there is nothing analogous in the moral and religious history of the world. The Philosopher may bequeath his discoveries; but not the Hero his virtue, or the Saint his sanctity. Character, religious insight, holy faith,—all the spiritual attributes which speak to the conscience and awaken the devout trusts of our nature,—are direct personal emanations and cannot be detached from the individual life of pure and lofty minds. The thoughts they think, indeed, may shape themselves into language, and go down to distant ages as the ethical wisdom or the prophet's vision or the lyric hymn of those who were most near to God; and from such words, written with the inmost spirit's flame, the fire never wholly dies. But no literature is able, like mathematical and physical exposition, to supersede and replace the living personality of the writer, and so to stand in his stead within the universal human intelligence, that, if only his propositions remain, it would matter not though he had never been. Science is the cold and neutral speech of Nature to the watching mind through the accidental organ of a man; literature,—especially in its voices

of affection, conscience and faith,—is the great confessional of humanity, the appeal of the lonely to the universal heart, the cry of deep to deep when the waves ride high and hands are stretched towards the Eternal Rock: it is essentially *personal*, our inner conference with one another, addressing itself to the sympathies, and needing the perpetual verification, of a common nature. Words and signs, which are adequate as the record of material laws and quantitative relations, are but an imperfect vehicle of this subtler action of the free spirit; and when divested of the aid of living light from the eye and tones from the voice and all the mysterious effluence of a kindling presence, give but a cold and faint reflection of the struggling thought within. And, were the expression ever so perfect, it speaks only to a congenial apprehension; to the interpreter without sympathy it has no meaning, but strikes dead upon the ear, like the maxims of experience to the child, or the music of sorrow to the heart stone-deaf. Moral and spiritual truth cannot dispense with reproduction in every mind: it has no efficacy except so far as it takes us up, one by one, and finds for itself fresh ground and response in each recipient: re-discovered as a real divine presence in the consciousness of individuals, it spreads by numerical multiplication rather than by quantitative enlargement; and as its chief differences are in depth and intensity, it defies the custody of language, and cannot, by mere record, grow from age to age. What, then, is the just inference from this distinction between natural and spiritual truth,—the one being cumulative in magnitude, the other personal in its repetition? Is it that the former alone holds the key of civilization and claims our whole attention; while the latter, in its sameness, may be thrown out of the account? Not at all; for the moral repetition may be, and assuredly is, a not less indispensable condition than the intellectual cumulation: but simply this; that while science has in itself a certain principle of self-preservation, and, once embodied in a treatise or an instrument,

may bear desertion for a while and tide over a period of darkness, moral and religious influence cleaves to living persons, spreads by the mutual understanding of affection and reverence, and dies from the heart of a selfish and corrupt age. That which books and arts can do for knowledge, must, in higher things, be committed to the ministry of faithful and devout men: who, daring to yield themselves up as organs of divine truth and love, may awaken in other minds the echoes of righteousness and holy trust, and carry the contagion of faith, hope and charity, within the reach of each several soul. Suppose all such agencies suspended; let there be none to interpret the handwriting of the Moral Law and the whispers of the Spirit; let the opaque curtains of the actual be drawn close around us for a generation and shut out every unrealized vision and darken the chamber of every seer; and it will soon be evident that, whether moral and religious truth can increase or not, it assuredly can dwindle: as the folds of appetite and interest grow thicker inwards, its sound is stifled; it shrinks to a mere potential point; and has to be recovered *ab initio*, when, through some shock of rescue, its dumb and torpid age is gone. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit:" low and selfish desires breed their own like in every character around, till society swarms with their deformity, and everything of fairer feature is forgotten and disbelieved; and the living fires of goodness, in like manner,—the heavenly temper, the hidden sacrifice, the repose of simplicity, the energy of utter trust,—spread by proximity from soul to soul, and grow numerous in answering recognition, till multitudes are fused into unity of light and love. If, then, intellect requires for its advance only antecedent knowledge, though it be for ages dead; if conscience and faith, even to hold their own, need the presence and the voice of living goodness and devotion; it is clear that, while the former has resources for ensuring itself, the latter must have its personal propaganda,—its prophets of the

open word, its preachers by the silent life,—in every generation.

The distinction already drawn, that our intellectual range has its advance *in extent*, our spiritual apprehension *in depth*, enables us to estimate the frequent taunt, that, at least within the circle of the Christian revelation, morals, metaphysics and theology have disclosed and can disclose no new truths. Suppose it were so; the fact would still not help us forward in our question, whether the disclosure of new truths is the sole force of civilization, or whether the deeper sense of old truths has not its essential influence as well. So far as these provinces become fruitful of discovery, they would themselves lie within the intellectual domain, and could only swell the triumph of its proud power. The real state of the case perhaps is this: human wonder directs itself into two fields, related in reality, divided in our apprehension; viz. (1) the play and flow of phenomena, by which, in this universe, the scenes are ever shifting before the observing eye, and through which the detecting intellect reads and registers a stated order of change; and (2) the eternal ground, the uncreated conditions, the self-existing Cause, whence, as unchanging, the successions of change all come. In the former field, we note what *evanescently happens;* in the latter, what *ever is.* Both of them make themselves a home within us through appropriate faculties of our nature; the one opening communication with our perceptive and generalizing powers; the other with the pure Reason and Conscience. As the objects of the first are the endless transients, of the second the simple eternities, of the world, it is evident that, in proportion as they both see truly, the cognition of the one must move on and reckon anew; while that of the other must stand and only more deeply gaze; and did this test fail or shift, of *discovery* in Science, of *constancy* in Morals and Religion, the essence of the two would be confounded, and the pretensions of both upset. Is this distinction, then, consonant as it is with the nature of the objects

known, any disparagement of the steady term? Can it be less important to the integrity and force of faculty whence all civilizing impulse must come, that we should present the open and sensitive eye to the patient infinitudes, than that we should keep accurate account of the laws of passing change? If our foresight of the facts of life depends on the right reading of its laws of natural succession, our insight into its spirit depends on the interpretation of its abiding and divine realities; and though we cannot say that, by truly construing the unchangeable Moral Law reflected in our nature and that eternal Mind where it is self-luminous, we ever gain new material arts or wider phenomenal vision, who can doubt that our whole tone of sentiment and affection may be thus transformed, and our entire personality be harmonized with the conditions amid which we live? Strange indeed would it be, if in a world wherein God dwells, revealing Himself in the constitution of its agents and on the field of its history, it could be neutral to its civilization whether this master-key to its whole meaning were reverently applied or absolutely missed!

In truth, the animating spring of all improvement, in individuals and in societies, is not their knowledge of the actual but their conception of the possible. To the personal conscience there is ever present a higher than it has reached, a light beyond which throws a perpetual shadow on the track behind. And if the social reformer who takes his vow against some public sin, successfully defies the cold cautions of experience, it is because the vision of a purified future steadies his eye and nerves his arm. And when a nation, after being parcelled out and crushed for generations beneath cruel and stupid tyrannies, rises in an hour, shakes off not its fetters only, but its jealousies, vindictiveness and lassitude, and proclaims its genius to be one, generous and free,—this is no mere revulsion from a degraded past: it is that some noble leader's dream of hope has fixed before the people's mind

an image glorious in its simplicity, which is their guiding star through the wilds and dangers they must pass. But for this irrepressible idea, sleeping or waking at the heart of our humanity, we should have no standard by which to try the present and measure its deformities and sins; and until it emerges from an idea into a *faith*, till it stands with us not for a prismatic semblance, but for the only real,—not for a dream of our own, but for a thought of God,—it can only breathe a sadness into life, and touch it with the flush of a hectic beauty: it may shape itself into creations of Art; it may speak in tones of Poetry; but it will lay no powerful hold upon the springs of the Will, inspire no sacrifice, dare no conflict. This is the very function of Morals and Religion,—this conversion of ideal thoughts into spiritual realities and solemn duties; and wherever there speaks to us a true interpreter, able to withdraw the veil of our inmost conscience, it is always to discover a divine substance under the form of some human dream, to detect an everlasting authority in some flitting surmise, to snatch us from the idle pathos of our poetic soliloquies, and set us abashed before them as tones from the living Word of God. So completely is our nature constituted to answer such appeal, that, till it reaches us, a sense of falsehood cleaves to everything, and we have no content; and few are burdened with spirits more uncertain, tempers more corrosive, convictions more precarious, than those who attempt to live only within the walls and by the rules of visible experience. Try to teach mankind by the mere maxims and expositions of external prudence and rectitude; offer them the whole code of wisdom deduced from the "natural laws;" abate every ideal claim, and ask them for nothing beyond their immediate powers; shew them that you have brought everything down to their own terms, and made it rational, easy and rewarding; and do you think you have found your way to either their better reason or their hearts? On the contrary, they will turn from you flattened and dispirited, thinking meanly of a life whose possibilities are so

soon exhausted and of a nature from which you dare demand no more: they cannot bear this weary level; they feel the stirring of some restless wing that would show them a deeper depth, a higher height; they know themselves made to sin upon a greater scale, and to be snatched into a sublimer redemption, than your unimpeachable rules and warnings contemplate. Humanity, left to itself, grows sick of its own company, and gasps for the relief of a holier air; and duty, however clearly seen and owned, remains languid and half done, except by the spirit that can rise beyond it. Not till the conscience has caught the vision of a divine perfection do the small human graces shine with any light. To this ideal constitution of our nature the Christian revelation, need I say, perfectly corresponds. What does its chief message set before us but a "kingdom of heaven," where the inner meaning of this world shall at length be realized, and man shall no longer disappoint the thought of God in creating him? And is not this hope presented to us by One in whose own person it was realized,—the spiritual head of our humanity, whose immortal life shines down upon us till it has drawn all men to its likeness? The whole appeal of Christianity is to secret and ideal relations that transcend the sphere of inductive experience; to the unbreathed thoughts that lurk behind the act, the tender purities that shrink from speech aloud; to the faith which "endures as seeing him who is invisible;" to the charity which keeps "from the left hand what the right hand doeth;" to the hope "that is not seen;" to the "mystery that doth not yet appear;" to the spirit "which searcheth deep things," and whose "witness" "cannot be uttered;" to the "life which is hid with Christ in God." The power, the sanctity, the solace of the gospel, all flow from this image of divine things behind the earthly and the human;—an image which no statistics of physical law can supersede or blot out, but whose colours,—unless what is highest in our nature and the past deceives us,—will continue to gleam

through the dust of this world's course, and light up the darkness of its end.

Though, however, moral and religious teaching can never be a copy of the actual world, but always of a divine ideal that transcends it, yet, in order to apply it to the relations and consciousness of men, it must keep clear of all variance with their widening knowledge and highest feeling: it must be pliant to the expanding pressure of new and nobler thought; and take care never to be the material contradiction, but always the holy transfiguration, of the universe, of history, of life, as the freshest and largest intelligence represents them. This necessity it is that renders it impossible to dispense with the fullest mental culture in those who aspire to a share in the Christian guidance of their time, and demands of them that they keep well abreast of the science, the scholarship, the philosophy of their age. The "kingdom of heaven" is not the same in its picture, though continuous in its spirit, through the centuries as they succeed: once it was the little Hebrew realm; to the Baptist it was Messiah's coming; to the Apostles the return of Christ and the end of the historic æons; to the Chiliasts the Millennium; to the medieval Catholicism the Roman theocracy; to the Evangelical Protestants the invisible Church of the elect; to a few the life to come; to *all*, according to the measure of their conception, the Divine thought and life in the world. It has transmigrated from form to form as each became too small to hold it, or was dissolved by the touch of time; and now, amid the riches of our modern experience, beneath the canopy of Herschel's sky, upon the surface of Lyell's earth, at the end of Bunsen's ages of humanity, and in presence of Müller's conspectus of tongues and peoples, it can never resume its antiquated shapes; nor dare we finally fix it with a Lo! here, or Lo! there; but can only wait upon the seasons of an expanding Providence, knowing that through all the "kingdom of God is within us." From the mere fact that Theology

is not so much one of the special segments of knowledge, as the comprehension of them all under the light and within the embrace of spiritual faith, it comes into contact with all the lines of human research: it belies its very nature when it rests content with the *cram* of professional learning, or only fills the torrent of a narrow zeal; and in its discipline it needs no less a genuine intellectual catholicity than, in its application, an unhesitating breadth and warmth of love. Whilst the simple devotedness of a pure and pious mind is a power unspeakably higher than any mere mental gift, it cannot in our time put itself forth with its proper efficacy, except under condition of competent sympathy with the modes and images of thought that distinguish the present from the past. In different strata of society the exigencies of ministration are doubtless in some degree different; though I believe there are none where the apprehensive tact and ready resource and refined bearing of the scholar and the gentleman will not be felt as powerful aids to the charity and devotion of the Christian. But whatever scope there may be, in the great Infirmary of human ills, for faithful labour in every form, *some* at least there ought ever to be who, while not slow to bind the wounded and tend the cup of cold water, can look beyond the suffering symptoms of the hour, or even the epidemic of the day, and following the maladies of our humanity to their deepest ground can obey the Supreme Physician's voice, "Bring them hither to me."

VI.

THE TRANSIENT AND THE PERMANENT IN THEOLOGY.*

THE act of finality which, two hundred years ago, shut up the future of the Church of England, opened it for the exiles whom it flung upon the world. The Nonconformists, discharged from their ecclesiastical allegiance, had to break with the past; and, like colonists landed on an untrodden shore, to trace the lines of their own spiritual commonwealth, to plant its fields with such seeds of promise as they had, and build, according to their own ideal, their city of God. Driven from the settled territory of tradition and usage, they were sent forth as explorers of new possibilities beyond the beaten track of experience. The National Church, relinquishing to them all untried forms of religious faith and life, proclaimed for herself, "Here I take my stand and keep the trust committed to me; I guard the eternal truth, for which there is no movement, but only rest." And certainly there is something majestic in the quiet persistency of her witness to divine things, something that seems to represent their own unchangeableness. Day by day in her cathedrals, week by week in her parish churches, her prayer, her penitence, her hope, have poured themselves forth in the same words; meditation has paced the same annual round

* Opening of Session, Manchester New College, London. October, 1862.

of lessons from holy writ; all faces have turned to the east at the same signal, and all lips repeated the same symbols of ancient faith;—expressing by a sublime monotony the repose of a patient piety, and testifying to those constancies in religion which are "the same yesterday, to-day and for ever. And it is a venerable office thus to compel the present to hear the voices of the past and meet them with some reverent sympathy; to qualify the dialect of the hour with the grave speech of an elder time; and through each season's deciduous crop of thought and feeling to shew the permanent stem and the everlasting root of faith. In proportion as the changes of the world are rapid, and its young spirit grows audacious and intense, do we need to be recalled to the ground of all vicissitude, and made to feel the filiation of our humanity. Still this is but half the duty of a church. However immutable the objects of faith, man, the believing subject, changes from age to age: the range of his knowledge, the meaning of his words, the colouring of his thought, are affected by every accession to science and every new character which genius impresses upon literature; and it is impossible that through all this the same representations of divine things should remain congenial to him, and retain at last the adequacy they had at first. And when we remember what the two centuries have been that expire this year; that they include the whole history of the European academies of science, and the lives of Newton, Davy, Cuvier and Humboldt; that among their products were the system of Locke, the scepsis of Hume, the critical philosophy of Kant; that they have enriched the shelves of the divine with the works of Cudworth and Butler, of Lardner and Priestley, of Schleiermacher, Neander and Ewald, to say nothing of Strauss and Baur; that they have kept the minds of men awake with vast political revolutions, fertile in temporary wars, but more fertile in the lasting arts of peace; that besides widening the general commonwealth of knowledge, they have given birth to

national literatures singularly rich and free;—we must own it impossible that, with nature, history, life so much expanded, the scope of religious conception should remain unchanged. The language of the elder theology respecting the creation of the heavens and the earth, the origin and the fall of man, the beginning and the end of death and sin, was indigenous to a lesser world than ours, and has a strange and childish sound in a universe opened by the telescope, on an earth interpreted by the geologist, and in face of what we now see of the great drama of human growth and civilization. Without some provision for discharging from its terms what is perishable and obsolete, and permitting its indestructible truth to live into new forms, no church can permanently meet the conditions of human life, but, while affecting to represent the eternal counsel of God, will slip away from the unresting intellect and affections of men. That the ecclesiastical constitution of this country contains no such provision, and pretends not only to uniformity but to perpetuity of doctrine, is placed beyond doubt by a recent judicial decision, in which this memorable statement occurs,—that should the progress of knowledge ever so conclusively disprove some affirmation of the established creed, the ordained minister is none the less bound to teach the exploded falsehood and disregard the discovered truth. This clashing between the obligations of personal veracity and the reverence for divine reality is notoriously no hypothetical contingency. In the free air of English life, the clergy cannot be cut off from the influences which circulate through the mental atmosphere of their time, and determine the modes of secular thought and the tone of current literature; and since the whole dogmatic scheme embodied in the symbols of the church has lost all hold of men of letters and science, since all natural speech which has any living force is quite empty of it, since European culture everywhere goes on apart from it, without even taking the trouble to contradict it, it must be foreign to the very

teachers of it, so far as they share the intellectual life of their age. And the struggles of a few foremost spirits among them to realize in fact a latitude denied to them in word, afford suggestions sad enough of sacred doubts that never become light, of noble longings sullenly suppressed, of minds enfeebled by disastrous compromise. It is a lesson hard to learn, but sure to make itself felt at last, that *a final church foregoes the future.*

It was with an implicit feeling, if not an explicit apprehension of this truth, that the Nonconformists of two centuries ago refused to bind themselves by the conditions proposed for them. They wanted not so much other doctrine as more latitude; not a different uniformity, but a freer variety. Scope for conscience, an open margin for the Spirit of God, a transparent way for fresh light from holy writ, room every way for the soul to turn about and try the paths to God,—this was the meaning of their cry; a meaning which, though hidden from themselves in their day of power, came out more and more clearly with the deeper experiences of natural sorrow and spiritual perplexity. As their complaint against the Church was, not that it was false, but that it was narrow,—so, when they came to provide for the training of successors to their own ministers, their injunction to the learned men entrusted with the task was, not "Teach them *our doctrine*," but "Teach them *to seek God's truth.*" The several Dissenting academies which preceded our own, founded by men smarting under the demand of subscription to articles of faith, were characterized by a high-minded trust in the issues of growing learning and the native force of sacred truth. They refused to take any security for right belief beyond the pure thirst for light in well-ordered, devout and duly-furnished minds; and charged their tutors with no other duty than to open before the intelligence and conscience of the student the media of divine knowledge, whether in scripture or in the universe, and let the persuasive word pass through. "Shew him where the infinite treasure lies; conduct him to the grand

points of contact between the divine and human in this world; give him command of the materials and exercise in the habit of thought; accustom his eye to the lines of spiritual light; and if then he follows not in our path, he may be able to lead us to a better;"—such, in effect, was the inscription on the vestibule of these institutions. This simple faith in nature and scripture as the unexhausted depositories, and in disciplined faculty as the apprehensive organ, of the highest truth, appears to me eminently dignified and noble. In its prospective and hopeful character, it is the natural complement of the other religion which only accepts and guards the past, and cannot but carry a different spirit into every department of theological culture. It has always influenced, and must always influence the whole program of study, the style of scholarship, the tone of piety, in the schools of learning which it animates. This will readily appear if we spread out before us in their mutual relations the main lines of religious research. I take them in the order, not of their relative importance to us, but of their logical bearing among themselves.

Theology is the doctrine of divine things; and for their their true apprehension the theologian must station himself at the points where they manifestly touch the human and leave their mark within the range of our life and thought. What and where are these?

I. One sphere there is of *immediate* relation between ourselves and God, where the apprehension of Him is first-hand and direct, viz. the sphere of our own mind. We are not made for the cognizance of finite and transient things alone, but have something in us answering to the whole realm of being in which we stand: on the one hand, to the natural world of phenomena; on the other, to the supernatural Reality behind. The structure of our faculties discloses more than we need for a true picture and an accurate reckoning of the physical theatre around, or even for the provident and comfortable ordering of human life: when our outfit for the visible and passing scene has been

measured off, there is still a mysterious fund of residuary thought, belief, affection, which, unless it be a delusion and a counterfeit, is the token of the invisible Perfection that is and was and ever will be. No sooner do we exercise any endowment of natural knowledge or momentary energy, than we are flung into mysterious discoveries that transcend experience; behind perception of the finite, Space uncreated and infinite; behind consciousness of succession, a motionless Eternity; behind perishable phenomena, imperishable Power; behind the impulses of affection and the problems of the will, the authority of a living Righteousness; behind the beauty of the world and the graces of pure souls, a light of meaning from the first Fair and the first Good. Strip off where you will the outer folds of intelligence or feeling, and you will find yourself in the presence of essential ideas all infinite, all converging upon a point in the invisible, all functions of an eternal life and thought. Self-knowledge therefore, in whatsoever direction, discloses in the last resort far more than self; and the sciences of self-knowledge, as their line drops deeper and deeper through the nature of man, feel in the end the unfathomable ground and touch the everlasting Rock. Logic, winding its way through the laws of thinking, rests at length at the roots of thought: Æsthetic, after removing the accidents of taste and defining the rules of just admiration and the principles of true Art, feels still a mystery of expressiveness which speaks and cannot be spoken of: Ethics, by simply unfolding the moral sentiments and examining the assumptions of the moral law, are transported beyond the limits of human nature, and brought face to face with an auguster Holiness. All knowledge of our own mind culminates in the apprehension of God; and I believe it was the sense of this fact that gave so prominent a place, in our old theological academies and literature, to moral, logical and metaphysical pursuits. It was not simply that they afforded a healthy discipline to the understanding; that the analysis of reasoning gave the power of detecting falsities; that the laws

of sensation and suggestion explained away the wonder from all our faculties, and exhibited belief and affection in the weaving; that to have insight into classification was to hold the key of science; that to scrutinize the essence of private right and wrong would make good casuists, and to know the theory of the State and its public law would help to form good citizens. True as all this is, the real interest of these studies lay elsewhere; in the vestiges sought within our humanity of a life more than human; in the suspected signs of a Divine witness to our reason, our conscience, our affections. Were it not for the hope of lifting some corner of the sacred veil, the deeper speculative philosophy, however serviceable as an intellectual gymnastic, would want that highest fascination by which in every age it has drawn to it so many capacious, fervid, meditative minds. But this consecrated charm, this divine thirst, is gone the moment you stereotype the forms of faith and shut up the future possibilities of light. Philosophy must have hope, or it will pine away; you cannot take from its voice the undertone of prayer; its foot must be free if it is to move at all. In churches, therefore, that have passed their acts of finality, its inspiration is extinct; it has no advance to make, no territory to win; as the bondslave of the past, it is permitted only to throw up earthworks of defence to stop the conquering founders of new empires. It needs but little acquaintance with literary history to perceive how prevailingly, under the rule of fixed ecclesiastical systems, a purely negative and critical function has been given to philosophy. At the utmost, leave has been granted it to work up, by some way of its own, to a foregone conclusion, and corroborate the Sacraments from Aristotle or the Trinity from Plato. More frequently it has been deemed dangerous to let both the councils of the church and the courts of philosophy sit under the same roof, with the advocates passing from the one to the other; and the jurisdiction of thought in cases of faith has been denied altogether. Psychology has been called in, but only to testify that we have no faculty of

divine apprehension; Logic, but only to disparage its own limits; Metaphysics, but only to demonstrate their incompetency; Ethics, but only to erase the religious value of moral distinctions. This is the last humiliation of philosophy, —to force its own implements into its own hand, that it may bleed itself to death and make the church its heir. If this is all it has to do,—to prove that it can do nothing, —it must soon be tired and ashamed of life and fly from the ignominy of existence. We may well be thankful that our forerunners escaped this attitude of scepticism towards the religion of Thought. They never dreamed that our humanity could be without any organ of religious knowledge, —constituted just as it might be in an atheistic world. They knew that without a prior Natural religion, no subsequent Revealed was possible, since on mere deaf incapacity even heavenly voices are thrown away. And by their habitual example and their abstinence from distrustful restraints upon the future, they encouraged the reverential and hopeful resort to human Reason and Conscience, as not only the seats of finite wisdom, but as audience-halls of God.

II. I have spoken of the theology arising in self-knowledge as an *immediate* apprehension of divine truth, in order to mark it off from religion that comes to us *through the medium* of some object interposed between ourselves and God, whether it be the visible frame of Nature or the persons and events of History. Is it a mysticism or an enthusiasm to refer us to a faith direct and intuitive, as distinguished from one indirect and logical? All that I mean is this,—that if, with your powers opened and matured, you were in solitude with God,—with no presence of the world or of the crowd of men,—you would not be without cognizance of Him; you would find, in what you had to think and feel, traces of something other and higher than self, and would not be forced into the delusive egotism of supposing you were all in all. To deny this is to say that there are no "footprints of the Creator" in the human

mind; or that while He leaves his mark on all gradations of creatures, the very being who is most expressly in his image is driven to the lower signs of his reality. This would be a strange result of the similitude, in the common element of spirituality, between his nature and ours,—that Living God and living Man should be ever in presence of each other, yet have no concerns together, no meeting-points of possible recognition, no gleam from the eternal perfectness mingling with the broken lights of human aspiration. If the language of our conscious spirits is all secular, the universe has for us no voices that are divine.

Man, however, would never know what he is, or even *be* what he is, were he suspended in loneliness, however sacred. For the training and evolution of his powers, for the awakening of his latent life, and therefore for his self-knowledge as well as for other knowledge, he needs the scene and society around him. The phenomena of his inner experience, when found, furnish him with a theology; but to find them, he must have also an outer experience, and belong to a world open to his intellect, and a human history that is the multiplying mirror of himself. Set thus in presence of objects related to his faculties and divinely constituted no less, he finds in them *mediate* sources of religion: of *natural* religion, so far as it flows in upon him from the spectacle of the universe: of *historical* religion, so far as it enters by the path of personal sympathy and reverence, and owns the manifestations of God in the spiritual records of humanity.

1. Of these two media of divine knowledge, *Nature*, the great source of Pagan religion, has been characteristically subordinated, not to say neglected, in Christendom. All the leading conceptions of the Christian faith are moral and personal, not cosmical; they arise out of the *direct* relation of the human spirit to the Divine, and would not be much affected though the world were removed out of the way. In the problems of sin and holiness, of ruin and redemption, of estrangement and reconciliation, sun and

stars, equator and ecliptic, have nothing to do : composition of water, and speed of light, and laws of crystallization, are irrelevant accidents; the rocks might have a different succession, and the flora and fauna of every zone might be changed, without touching the result. From this neutral attitude of physical phenomena towards Christian ideas, it might seem to follow, that the theologian had no interest, either way, for or against the researches of men of science; that their whole intellectual field was foreign to him, and therefore equally safe from his interference, whether his system were shut or open. In this case, as there would be no affinity, so there would be no clashing, between religion and science : and on this basis accordingly many a treaty of peace has been concluded between divines who cannot keep their eyes off nature, and *savans* who will give anything for a quiet life. In effect, however, the rule supplies but a hollow truce which it is impossible to keep. The divine, entrenched behind the written word of God, may give up all natural Theism, and let the study of nature pass free as a mere secular pursuit : but he soon discovers that, if it cannot establish natural religion, it can contradict what he had reserved as revealed; and is angry at the breach of understanding, by which the instruments of discovery and peaceful art are turned against him as weapons of war. Must we not tell him, it is his own fault? Is he not himself the first offender, in taking more than he could fairly claim into his reserved field? Did he not label a good many scientific propositions with the name "Revealed Religion," and carry them off into his sacred enclosure? and can he be offended if they are re-captured and perhaps destroyed? That the universe was created in six days, the earth as the chief thing, and the starry heavens as its decorated roof; that the human race are descended from one pair, of whose lapse Death and Sin are the perpetual entail; that, in redemption of this entail, a divine person, born of a woman, assumed our humanity, confronted the spirits of evil, and drove them from the minds and bodies they had possessed,

and carried off the general curse by his own sacrifice;—these are samples of doctrinal assertion that variously trench on the domain of natural knowledge, and must be amenable to its scrutiny. A church which is committed to them has already thrown down the gauntlet to science, and instinctively looks for an adversary in every calm advance of discovery or sudden rush of genius. The only escape from this humiliating fear is an unpledged theology, inaccessible to all variations of phenomenal knowledge, and consecrating nothing as "revealed" but those moral and spiritual truths whose range is beyond the reach of induction, which no telescope can interpret into meteors, no analysis precipitate as dust. But this is not all. Besides the negative relief from fear, a positive trust that greater conceptions must dawn upon us ensues from an open faith: the indifference to science as merely secular, and its discharge from all higher obligations, are recalled: Nature, no longer suspected of being against us, is re-consecrated as the handiwork of God; and a reverent curiosity seeks for true links of thought by which to connect the divine order of the outer world with the divine inner laws of our humanity. Precisely and only in proportion as the intellect has been released from the restraints of a fixed dogmatic system, has the interest in natural religion deepened, and the foresight of science been found compatible with the insight of faith. Care for natural religion is the constant attendant on breadth of Christian faith. It needed some latitude of thought in Newton to stand upon the confines of the new universe he had found, and find its relation to Him whose duration (to use the Philosopher's own solemn words) "reaches from eternity to eternity; whose presence from infinity to infinity; who governs all things, and knows all things that are or can be done":* in Clarke to construct, in Butler to criticize the Theistic interpretation of space and time: in Priestley to blend into one whole the discoveries of the chemist, and the meditations of the

* Principia, the concluding Scholium.

divine. Wherever the relations are deeply pondered between the method of physical and that of religious knowledge, not for the sake of severing them by any impassable chasm, but in the hope of bringing them to unity, depend upon it you are in the presence of a liberal school or a liberal age. The noble wonder of the intellect, which still sighs and seeks for a "First Philosophy" able, with the two eyes of faith and science, to make the double picture one, can live only in men and churches that have something to learn. If any sacredness is to invest natural knowledge, if it is to be more than the outfit for a profession, the source of material power, and the occasion of mean competition in the race of ideas, it will owe it to the few whose worship as well as science is touched with hope, and expects from the brightest meridian of knowledge the richest vesper glow of prayer.

2. The great medium, however, of divine contact with our world is not, after all, the physical Cosmos, that speaks God's power and the method of his thought, but the constitution and course of human history, which are the organs of his communicated character and will. Clear traces of himself he has doubtless impressed on the individual soul. But individuality itself is not formed except in society and by long inheritance of time; it is the last product of rich and various culture; and the philosopher or worshipper of to-day is an epitome of all the ages. The lives of other men, their spoken admiration, their acted grief and passion, the stature of their higher nobleness, touch us with more than sympathy, and are the great means of shewing us what we are, and lifting us towards what we are not yet. Biography, history, and language,—that wonderful crystallization of the very flow and spray of thought,—constitute an objective self-knowledge, and, by a thousand affinities, draw out into clearer light whatever our nature holds of authoritative and divine. If men have never and nowhere been left alone by their Heavenly Guide, if his mystery has always mingled with their life,

ancient and foreign literature can in no case be quite profane, but in their artless expressions of wonder, love and pity, must appeal to some pieties in us; and even where no religious end is directly in view, a wide and scholarly familiarity with the words and ways of other times, with their special types of character, with the tone of their poetry and the temper of their laws, indirectly generates an atmosphere of humane and considerate sympathy, the proper climate of justice and veneration. It is not, however, till we address ourselves to men's conscious thought about divine things, their efforts to pass behind the veil of the visible world and read the secrets there, that we begin to glean and count the scattered elements of sacred truth on which the higher trusts of humanity have lived.[m] The time is past when faiths and philosophies foreign to our own were studied merely to contrast their darkness with our light, and make the chasm absolute all round our solitary island of exclusive revelation. We begin to see that they were the noble efforts of a reason never wholly baffled, a conscience never quite asleep, and became the depositaries of partial truth, till the stream of "living water" could take up the confluent tributaries and fill the river of life. In this thought we gain, for the first time, the key of interpretation for what is alien to our experience. Antipathy understands nothing; and not till the theologian looks on Christendom as the last stage in the providential evolution and inspiration of humanity, related to all that goes before, will he apprehend either what lies within or what lies beyond his own faith. But once let him seize this point of view, and then the attempt to master systems of thought belonging to another intellectual latitude will afford him the finest discipline of understanding and sympathy; and while imparting a catholic breadth of aspiration for what is distant from him, will leave the keenest sense of the distinctive sanctities that abide with him at home. To a wide knowledge and thoughtful estimate of

the past we must look as the only real safeguard against the passing caprices of sceptic or fanatic thought. Churches that have no trust take securities from their clergy, and bind them to the forms of distant centuries; but what they gain in persistency they lose in life. On the other hand, the mere practical man of to-day, nurtured on the current literature and touched with the newest zeal, goes into utter captivity to the humour of the hour; and if he seems to lead others, does so by the levity of his nature, carrying him ahead of them down any stream of tendency that may have the swiftest flow. In the minister of sacred things, who represents before men the constancies of eternal truth and righteousness, this helpless mobility is a humiliating spectacle, secretly despised amid the noisest applause. We expect from him a spirit lifted above the fitful temperature that alternately strains or relaxes the chords of more dependent minds; and we shall expect in vain, unless we help him to an intellectual eminence above surprise, whence the great movements of humanity can be watched with the quick eye of Pity and of Trust, and the distant voices of its prayer and strife can meet the ear.

It must needs be, however, that the history and literature of paramount interest for us are those which convey to us and embody our own faith. The sacred records of the Hebrew race, and the primitive memorials of the Christian revelation, must ever form the main objects of the theologian's study, the spring of his inspiration, the source of his teaching. Other ignorances of his may be deplorable; but ignorance of these is simply disqualifying. The languages in which they were written, the origin of their constituent books, the history of their text, the comparison of their versions, the interpretation of their contents, have been treated so copiously since the Reformation, as to create a vast apparatus of sacred learning, itself the material of no little subsidiary scholarship; but the topics are worthy of it all. True, the keenness and minuteness of biblical

research may have arisen from a too narrow and rigorous conception of the Word of God,—from an acceptance of the Scriptures as throughout a kind of divine legal instrument, which criticism had only to construe and piety to obey. If so, however, it needs a still larger and more searching erudition to undo the effects of this error, and to resolve the false documentary monotony into the variegated lights, divine and human, the distinctive colourings of person, place and time, that make the difference felt between the dead letter of a bequest and the living spirit of a sacred history. In truth, the genuine grounds of theological defence for biblical learning are far stronger than any fiction of which they take the place. If in the Scriptures we had one uniform charter, any part of which might be used in explanation of any other, its meaning would open to the key of a simply grammatical and textual criticism, and the scholarly divine would be a mere competent translator and annotator. But if the interest of the writings consists in this, that while they constitute a purely human literature, they tell the story, and confess the sins, and breathe the devotion, of a people most susceptible of the prophetic inspiration and most conscious of their divine Guide,—that, further, they present to us, as the consummate flower of this growing and refining life, the transcendent personality of Jesus, in whom the power of the Spirit took up humanity entirely and showed it to be immortal, yet draw this picture with touches various and rude, not in its absolute reality, but in its relative impression upon differing and wondering minds;—then, although the essence of their truth may speak for itself to the sound in reason and the pure in heart, yet rightly to disengage it from its envelopments, without either giving them its authority or throwing them away, is a work far beyond the reach of the mere grammarian and translator,—a work of historical reconstruction, in which there is use for the amplest materials of learning, commanded by force of

imagination and cultivated sympathy. The large combinations of modern historical criticism bring with them, no doubt, their speculative temptations; but no one can doubt that they are the fruit of not less erudition and of greater genius than the annotative scholarship of rigid schools and of an earlier time.

VII.

THEOLOGY IN RELATION TO PROGRESSIVE KNOWLEDGE.*

THE College which resumes its work this day professes to impart a special training for the Christian Ministry; and the Christian Minister is one who, in discipleship to Jesus Christ, aims to guide the reverence, to ennoble the conscience, and sustain the piety, of men. To treat such an office as the object of a particular discipline, not simply for the character and affections, but for the intellect too, takes for granted, what has not always been admitted, that Theology is, in some sense, a Science and admits of being methodically taught. This assumption would be false, if religious truth were simply a natural intuition, or a supernatural inspiration, in each individual mind. Just as Aristotle, in order to save Ethics for scientific treatment, dismisses the hypothesis that virtue is either a native faculty or a given feeling, and insists that it is a formed quality and developed order of preferences in the mind;† so, if our "schools of the prophets" are to have any justification, we must be prepared to show, that religion contains matter for teaching, and is neither inborn like eyesight, nor an arbitrary visitant like a trance or dream: for, in the one case, training would be superfluous, and, in the other, impossible. All teaching is communication from mind to mind: it implies that one

* Opening of Session, Manchester New College, London. October, 1865.

† Eth. Nic. II. v.

mind may know more than another, and the same mind more at a later time than at an earlier. And, using the inequality as instrument for the progress, it further assumes that teacher and taught, instead of being abandoned to lonely inspiration,—"words that cannot be uttered,"—have a common medium of thought and mutual intelligence, and can meet, when they speak together, upon the same real objects. As every Medical school takes for granted, by its very existence, that the animal body is real, and its physiological constitution permanent and cognizable; as every Law school takes for granted that human society is constant, and throws its self-regulating forces into a machinery but little variable; so does a Theological school assume that God and his relations to man are objective realities, perpetually there and approachable by human faculties. Two things therefore, with regard to the nature of religion, are denied by every such institution as this: (1) it is not a mere natural instinct; (2) it is not a mere supernatural grace. And two things about it are affirmed: (1) it presents something real and permanent for the intellect to hold by: (2) it has its undetermined and progressive lines, on which it is the business of the teacher to move and mark the fixed points as they emerge.

Without this mixed composition, of the constant and the variable, it may be doubted whether, intellectually, religion would retain its interest at all. Were it nothing but a scheme of shifting conceptions, unrelated to anything beyond our personality,—the mere shadow of ourselves flung on the universe without,—it might remain, like any other illusion, a curious object of psychological analysis, but would lose all serious place in human life. Were it, on the other hand, a scheme of absolute knowledge, so determined and rounded off as to be, like its Object, "without variableness or shadow of a turning," it might no doubt be recited afresh to each generation, like the alphabet or the numeration table, and so far be made the business of a school: but however new to the learner, it would be

old to the teacher, and become wearisome as a routine, unquickened by the real life of his mind. So repugnant is this to both the intellectual and the spiritual nature, that no effort can render it possible for long. Thought is alive, and cannot rotate like a machine; and, in its eagerness for movement, carries every science with it, if not into advance, into aberration,—at any rate into change. Still more are reverence and affection alive; and, while faithful to the same object, they are unable to rest without transporting it into a new air and investing it with fresh lights: so that a religion forbidden to improve betakes itself to degeneracy, rather than become petrified, and, instead of growing upwards into statelier proportions, breaks into lateral deformities, as the only vent for its vitality. What, for instance, are all the outrages on sense and history committed by the prophetic or allegorical interpreter, but an attempt to adjust a fixed text to a moving world, to find room within the narrow frame of the ancient letter for the grand lines and various groups of the modern picture? These cannot be left out of the scheme of faith, since they have found their way into the scheme of things: and those who seek for God, not in his own universe, but in a document about it, are obliged to stretch and distort the record to make room for what is not there. Even in the most stationary theologies, the real interest lies in the expansion of old truth to embrace and consecrate the newest births of time.

The mode, however, of dividing the constant from the variable elements in a religion is not always the same; and in the intellectual training of Christian teachers, it makes the greatest difference which of two principles we adopt as our rule.

The first assumes that the things to be taught are a determinate stock of truths given in perpetuity, susceptible of no increase, secured against all abatement. These are the divine *constants;* filling the whole sphere of religion; and throwing out all the variables into the secular sciences and arts; amid which religion is to find its application

without any reaction upon its theory. Let us consider what direction is naturally impressed upon theological education by this assumption.

The primary aim will be to teach methodically the fixed scheme of positive religion, and secure on every side its hold on the student's mind. Nor is it by any means a scanty intellectual culture that may subserve this end. For the Protestant (to whom we must limit our view) the scheme is embodied in Scripture. Now to be master of Scripture is to be at home in two languages, most unlike each other, and long silent upon the earth: to have an eye and ear for their dialectic variations in time and place; to trace the literary life of the Hebrew people from its dawn to its decline, and of Christendom in its obscure beginnings; to be familiar with the history of the Eastern world till it became a province of the West. These resources are needed for entering into the interior of Scripture. But no ancient book is rightly appreciated, unless its external history is surveyed, and the witnesses examined to its origin, its travels, its transmission, the uncertainties of its text, and worth of its translations:—researches, the extent and complexity of which are sufficiently attested by the immense critical apparatus they have placed at our disposal. From the moment when the Scriptures were snatched from sacerdotal keeping and delivered over, as the new-found oracles of God, to the venerating scrutiny of reading men, the development of sacred learning was large and rapid; and, though for a time suspended by the excitement and desolation of religious wars, still shewed, in Limborch and Le Clerc, how little the intellectual impulse given by Calvin and Beza had spent its force. The refinement and security which modern scholarship has gradually attained, and the compendious form into which the results of vast research are now reduced, are unfavourable to the reputation of those earlier masters of sacred criticism: the light handbook gives us what we want at a glance, and their heavy folios are left to gather the dust upon our shelves. But

whoever has occasion to consult them will be disposed to wonder at the vast strides of approach already made towards the standard of learning in our own day; especially when he remembers to how great an extent the scholar of the sixteenth and even the seventeenth century had to be his own lexicographer and grammarian, to make his own index and concordance, to work out his own archæology, to construct his own maps and tables of dates, and go to the sources of history for himself. These disadvantages, which would excuse a much greater inaccuracy than we actually find, drove the man of learning out over an immense field, and gave him a range of erudition and a grasp of judgment which may well astonish the more special students of later times.

The proportions in which the religious and the simply intellectual impulse contributed to the great works of Protestant erudition, it is impossible to determine. Were it not that, at the revival of learning, precisely similar phenomena appeared on the field of secular literature, and Joseph Scaliger and Henry Stephens rivalled the greatest prodigies of theological industry, we might be tempted to say that nothing short of an overpowering reverence for the Bible as the word of God, could sustain the laborious patience of the old divines, or invest with any living interest their verbal criticisms and technical disputes. Perhaps the spell put upon the imagination in the two cases, by the undiscovered wisdom and beauty of Pagan literature, and by the spiritual depth of the sacred books, was not so dissimilar as we might suppose, and would stir the mind to the same efforts, and produce analogous results. But, when the first flush of wondering impulse had passed away, secular and sacred learning were doomed, by a single cause, to take different directions, and acquire a character ever more distinct. The Scriptures were assumed to be a continuous oracle, an unbroken authoritative record, homogeneous for all the purposes of religious guidance, a divine book in which the ever-living Author, wielding the human

secretaries as his organs of communication, discloses all that is known of his will and moral government. If a critic were to treat the Iliad of Homer, the Cyropædeia of Xenophon, and the history of Thucydides, as belonging to one another, and all as components of the philosophy of Aristotle, the results could scarcely be more fatally grotesque. No doubt, the sanctity attributed to every line secured an eager and prolonged scrutiny of the text, word by word: but the gaze was too close, and the imaginary light was too intense, for clear and comprehensive vision. An exaggerated significance was seen in the simplest phrase; narrative was construed into type, and myth mistaken for history; a Hebrew ode was made to yield evangelic dogma; and whether the Elohist or the Jehovist told the story of Creation, whether Job affirmed of God or his friends denied, whether the Preacher taught Epicureanism or the later Isaiah the law of humiliation, whether Matthew presented Christ as miraculously conceived, or Paul as the pre-existing spiritual Adam, or John the evangelist as the Incarnate Logos,—it was all alike authoritative,—the various elements fused into one uniform alloy, and re-issued, as shekels of gold, to serve for coin of the temple. In the presence of such preconceptions, it is evident that all historical method, all recognition of natural growth of religious ideas, all critical appreciation of contrasted doctrines, all discharge of local and personal errors from the imperishable essence of divine truth, must remain impossible: and scholarship, kindled at first, but dizzied at last, with the monotonous glory it sees upon the page, settles into blindness and distinguishes nothing. There is an immense accumulation of theological erudition; but, under this spell, it lies dead and dark, and yields none of the brilliant results of the corresponding secular learning. There is not within it the free, sincere and healthy movement on which elsewhere the veracious instinct of the intellect insists; it is held in hand and marched about, as if to check an enemy. Are there weak places exposed and threatened? its masses are

ordered up to close and hide them. Can an impression be made of reserved strength? its ranks are opened to shew it and scare assault away. This is not the spirit of the true scholar; who, knowing no enemy, can leave unguarded any holy places already held, and go forth, as pilgrim and explorer, to find new ones that shall enlarge his homage and consecrate fresh points upon the world.

Not even the most rigid theologian, however, can live exclusively with what he regards as the *constants* of religion. Fix these as he may, he finds himself in a changing scene, with the *variables* of which he is in immediate contact; and the relations between the immutable data of his creed and the shifting conditions of human life have to be re-adjusted, as new ideas and wants arise. To qualify himself for this, and become a proficient in *applied religion*, he must know how the world is going on, follow in the track of the advancing sciences, listen to the tones of the younger literature, and breathe the air of other men's thought. He cannot act as trustee of the deposit committed to him, unless he looks around him and sees how it is to be administered in the altered temper of the generations as they rise; what doubts it has to meet, what repugnance to encounter; by what fresh paths of approach it must reach minds now transported into uncalculated latitudes. Theological education, therefore, however severely conservative, is far from deserving the reproach of indifference to the march of the phenomenal sciences. Its own purpose can never be fulfilled without a comprehensive knowledge, revised and filled in from time to time, of whatever the historical critic, and the inductive philosopher, and the speculative thinker, may profess to have achieved. But, under such an inflexible system, the student's specialty is this; through his wide range he sees nothing in its simply natural light, judges nothing by its own proper evidence, but carries with him a criterion foreign to the field; his stock of *constants* he uses as *regulative*, determining without appeal what shall be taken and what be left; all that falls

in with them he appropriates and works in to modernize his creed; all that conflicts with them he discards and blackens as profane. By thus importing the postulates of a divinity-school as the measure of inductive truth, a hopeless breach is created between the logic of theology and that of science, and a war begun which is the more miserable, because the parties to it, always within reach of irritating challenge, move upon different lines and can never fairly meet. It is needless to say how this method spoils everything it touches, scholarship, natural knowledge, religion, and produces the temper most alien to the genius of them all. Is it not a melancholy fact that every modern science has had to make good its footing, not only against sluggish incredulity and prejudice, but against misguided piety? that the very Sun could not find his right place in the heavens, or Man prove, by bits of pottery and flint, his long tenancy of this earth, without a clamour of devout fear and futile contradiction? Is it right that we should always know beforehand, irrespective of the evidence, what reception every physical or ethnological theory which makes large demands on time, every critical verdict which lowers the date or re-names the author of a Hebrew book, will meet with from the clergy? There must be something wrong in a system which disturbs the quiet of eternal truth by dissolving in it a fermenting mass of decaying opinion; and whoever can precipitate the precarious foreign admixtures, and leave the fountains of faith pure and clear, brings the truest healing to the moral and spiritual life of men.

In order to provide for this function, and escape the evils just described, the College for which I speak to-day follows a different rule in drawing its line between the constants and the variables in religion. The principle is this: the things *about which we teach* are given in perpetuity; but the things *to be taught about them* are open to revision in every age. God, in his relations to the universe and to ourselves; Man, his individual and social nature, his responsible position, his history, his destination,—are the

ultimate objects which we here aspire to know; and, as media of this knowledge, on the philosophical side, the intellectual, ethical and spiritual phenomena of the mind; and, on the historical, the manifestations of Divine Life in the past of our humanity, and primarily in the person and work of Jesus Christ, with whom it culminates, and from whom dates a new birth of inextinguishable faith and aspiration, a new glow, unexhausted yet, of pity and of hope. The form and spirit of an intellectual training conducted on this principle it is not difficult to trace.

It is sometimes supposed, that where so much is left open to revision, the continuity of belief must be broken, and no permanent roots be struck to feed the growth and mature the fruits of religious character. Each teacher, it is imagined, relying on his lonely fancies, and dignifying them with the name of intuitions, will begin his quest *de novo*, and think out his scheme of doctrine, as if he were floating by himself in space; owning no authority, and deriving no strength from his partnership in the heritage of humanity. Nothing can be more erroneous. No doubt it must always rest with the individual reason and conscience to pronounce the personal verdict of true or false; but the pleadings on which they decide are fetched from the gathered stores of Christian and heathen wisdom, and epitomize the thought expended on the oldest and deepest problems; and, when seeming to flow immediately from a single mind, are rendered possible there only by a traceless myriad of influences infiltrating into it from earlier time. The whole Past must rain upon the uplands, and the clouds hang on the invisible peaks, of history, to make the smallest rill of thought that winds through our own day. Even in the philosophical treatment of natural Ethics and Religion, where, as in all deductive reasoning, we seem to be independent of what predecessors have found, and to draw conclusions that would be at home in any age, the appearance is illusory; for that very human nature from whose phenomena we reason and whose affections we interpret,

has expanded into new and richer forms, and presents, in its circle of Christian experience, data unknown before. And in historical theology, the very semblance of any breach with the past is simply impossible. No man can extemporize, or spin out of himself, a critical knowledge of ancient languages, literature and life; he is here absolutely dependent on forerunners for his whole outfit of original assumptions and beliefs, and must start on his own explorings from the point at which they have deposited him. The slow and gentle way in which alone the shadows can ever break from off the ancient world, and a little light steal in, now from the pages of a recovered book, now through the propylæum of a dug-up temple, and then from some happy flash of philological combination, sufficiently secures us, so long as we are simple and trustful, without fear and without guile, from any but silent and insensible changes of historical conviction. In such matters, the shocks all come from our insincerities and delays on the one hand, and from the reaction of irreverent extravagance provoked upon the other; feverish paroxysms being the inevitable retribution of long reticence and suppression.

In order to fall in with the peaceful course of theological change, to hold by what is undisturbed, and detach it from the doom of the rest, the student must be well brought up to the point already reached, the point at which he pitches his tent and raises his altar, till he is ordered to move on. This involves the whole apparatus of knowledge required, in the former case, by the stationary defender of the faith; together with an important addition, viz., an acquaintance with the *history* of theology, in the largest sense; not only with the ecclesiastical stages by which accepted dogma was formed, but with the inverse critical processes by which it has been partially dissolved, and removed from the faith of scholarly men. One who is pledged to hold a compacted scheme of belief as divine, can never recognize it as growing or declining with the changing seasons of our nature, at one time the creation, at another the victim, of human

reason. He is obliged, therefore, to ignore its history, however indisputable it may be; to treat as an image fallen from heaven, some idol of doctrine which, if you are familiar with its first age, you may see gradually moulded under the pressure of the time; and to insist that it still stands as adamant, though in the dry intellectual air all its tenacity is gone, and observers wonder when the clay is to crumble into dust. Even within the memory of our own generation, how many are the determinate points of change, which it would be simply stupid not to register as past events in the history of opinion! What has become of the date which stood in our school-tables, "Creation of the World, B.C. 4004"? and what of the next, "The Universal Deluge, B.C. 2348"? Into what undreamt-of distance has Egyptian chronology retreated! yet how many such steps must we repeat, ere we alight upon the first vestiges of man! and how many more, to exhaust the relics of life and death upon this world! We have learned to recognize the composite structure and comparatively low date of the Pentateuch; the progression of religious doctrine through the Old Testament; its variety in the New; the mixture of unhistorical elements in both, and of human opinions long ago corrected, and expectations never fulfilled. In what state of mind would the scholar be who did not know these things? or the reasoner who should suppose that they left all as it was before? All that is *real*, indeed, all that is *Divine*,—God in his perfection, Christ in his filial sanctity, and for humanity the eternal law of Duty and Self-sacrifice, —they and similar changes without end, sweep past and leave more majestic than before. But he only can feel the serenity of this assurance, to whose trust no constants are essential beyond the irremovable realities.

Even he, however, must, from time to time, take careful account of the course of discovery in its bearings on the common heritage of faith, with a view to guide and re-settle the piety of others. For this end, something more is needed than a knowledge of what has already been done, affecting

theological belief: he must know what is *still doing*,—the inquiries that are hovering and preparing to alight,—the thoughts that are in the air,—the weather-signs that drift upon the clouds: for these, interpreted by the law of the past, will often give a serviceable presage of the future, and prevent the misplacement of sympathy and effort. If he have the tact of a tender and pious heart, he will use this foresight of the probable direction of thought, not loudly to prejudge what is yet on trial, or to hurt a reverence which time, if it does not entirely spare, may gently train another way; but to avoid lingering too long upon a precarious spot, and silently to withdraw men's worship to ground for ever sacred. But, beyond this noiseless preparation for changes that may not be far, he will guard his mind against any interest of religious partizanship in the pending problems of science or criticism. Removed alike from boastful elation at their progress and from blind repugnance to it, he will give his religion no regulative power over his scientific judgment: so that, from the tone of his devotion and the cast of his affections, you shall not be able to tell beforehand what he thinks of the origin of species, or the antiquity of man, or the date of Daniel, or the authenticity of the fourth Gospel: but he will surrender himself simply to the facts as they appear in evidence; frankly going with every conclusion fairly won; pausing in every suspense; resting on what is undisturbed; deeming it the office at once of reason and of faith, not to bespeak the universe that ought to be, but humbly to accept the universe that is, and find room in it for reverence and trust.

That this enlargement of the variables in theology, so as to include the whole sphere of phenomenal knowledge, is alone consistent with the true temper of the philosopher and the scholar, will hardly be questioned. But how will it affect our religion? Does it not put Revelation at hazard? Is piety safe, when so much to which it clings is set afloat?

I reply, our rule sets nothing afloat, but only provides how we shall demean ourselves towards that which, by the

decree of nature and of God, *is afloat:* and the rule is simply, not to deal with it, whilst it is in motion, as if it were fixed. Certainty is not ours to create or to annihilate; we cannot make it, by pretending it; we do not destroy it, by letting its absence speak for itself. If piety has been brought, as is too probable, to cling to many doubtful and perishable things, so far it is assuredly unsafe: but will you remedy this by declaring the doubtful to be sure, and the perishable immortal? or, by giving the affection its true Object, and carrying it to an eternal rest? If Christendom, sickly and feeble with its long disease of dogma, has come to put its trust, not so much in the living God and his own real ways, as in certain opinions about him and reports of his acts, it is a healing process to disengage its soul from the detaining veil of human notions and propositions, and deliver it straight into personal divine relations. An unreserved repose upon reality, an acceptance of it as better than any semblance and having absolute right over our ideas, is the genuine piety of the intellect, without which there is no sacredness in its exercise, no struggling refractions, no tender tints of trust and sacrifice, to mellow its dry light.

All "Revelation," by the very force of the term, must be a disclosure of *things as they are.* Every corrected conception of things as they are, sustained by scientific evidence, either concurs with the presumed revelation, or it does not. If it does not, a human error is eliminated from an aggregate which we had charged entirely on God, and what is his own stands purified: the natural has gained a light, and the supernatural has lost a darkness. If it *does* concur, then what was before known as revealed is now also known as natural: we see for ourselves what had been taken on the testimony of those who knew better; and our apprehension is unspeakably cleared and deepened. The truth no longer hangs detached, plainly seen indeed, but apart from its tissue of relations; it has found its footing and settled upon its own ground. Revealed religion, so far as it is not fancied

but real, must always be undergoing this conversion into natural: if it gives us the master-thought of God, the true key to which the unopened recesses of the inner and the outer world will yield, it can hardly fail to find, or by developing to add, the experiences which conform to it and evidence it. Whatever, being found in Scripture, is re-found in nature and in life, becomes an independent possession of humanity; and, except that the *history* of truth is only second in importance to truth itself, the very Scriptures might so far suffer again their medieval disappearance, without loss of the treasure they had given to the world.

And, if the theologians could but look with a calm eye upon the past, they must see that, wherever the strife is over and the field is still, every advance of knowledge has been a gain to religion, won at the expense only of deforming fictions. As our petty schemes of the world break in pieces and fall away, diviner ones construct themselves and make us ashamed of our regrets. Who would now, in the interests of piety, wish to have back the childish little cosmos of the Hebrew legends, or the three stories of the Pauline heaven? or dare to say, that, in superseding them, Copernicus and Newton blasphemed? Who would choose to have no cosmos at all till six thousand years ago, or fling a stone at a Herschel or a Lyell for letting in light and shewing life within that dark immensity? The age of the world, as it deepens, does but prolong its testimony to God, and make it worthier of his eternity: its scale, as it expands, does but place us in a temple more august, and nearer to his Infinity. Does any one, whose mind has been enlarged by ancient history and whose heart has listened to the old mythologies, want to have his sympathies reduced again to the "chosen people," and the divine communion with our race, so various and pathetic in its early struggling tones, restricted to that only channel? And if from the person of Jesus Christ the artificial dress of Messianic investiture and some disguising shreds of Jewish fable, drop away, who that can fix an appreciating eye on the emerging form, will not say that it

is diviner far, embodying in its grand and touching lineaments the essence and spirit of a new life of God in our humanity? This experience, this removal to a higher point of faith, is from the first the invariable result with the scholar who works most freely, because quite trustfully, at these problems: as, after long delay, it comes to be the result with all at last. The intermediate disturbance of religious calm,—the pious dismay on the one hand, the petulant irreverence on the other,—befall chiefly those who do not intimately commune with such researches, but, looking on, judge them by external and inapplicable standards, and not by their inner and essential relations. Whoever, in these things, has gone deep and touched ground, is not afraid of falling into a bottomless abyss: and hence the moral importance of that thoroughness of study which we strive to cultivate here. For, may we not say, the essence of the large and liberal spirit lies in the absence of fear and the promptness of love?

VIII.

A WORD FOR SCIENTIFIC THEOLOGY.*

THE College which enters to-day on a new year of work belongs, however modest its own pretensions, to a class of institutions highly characteristic of English life. They are lineally descended from the Puritan resistance to sacerdotal authority; they are the public declaration that England shall not be all Anglican; the acknowledgment of a sphere of truth and duty where no writ of King or Parliament will run. The Act of Uniformity, which finally destroyed the religious unity it aimed to establish, terminated also the educational unity which had brought all candidates for University learning to Oxford and Cambridge. The national character and convictions had set in two distinct types, and were following two different directions: and those ancient schools would henceforth represent but one. The other, not content to be starved out, had to create for itself private institutions where, perhaps under some reverend exile returned from the lecture-rooms of Leyden or Basel, the sons of the Nonconformist gentry and their future clergy might find compensation for what even Magdalen College must now deny them. The disadvantage of these poor schools is so obviously great, that there is less to wonder at in the scholarly contempt for the "Dissenting Academies," than in the fair success with which they have fostered the love of learning and the appreciation of intel-

* Opening of Session, Manchester New College, London. October, 1868.

lectual gifts among a people driven from the public springs of higher life. Without fixed seat or local associations, without libraries, without endowments; lodged in no venerable halls rich in the memorials of English history; dependent on the precarious bounty of living supporters and the still more precarious capacity of accessible teachers; with scant companionship, with little emulation and less variety of mind; these obscure Colleges seem not only repellent to all natural ambition, but unqualified to be the home of a large and liberal culture. Something indeed they have had to plead as a set-off against this poverty of resource. In the spiritual field it is not always the most elaborate husbandry that produces the most ample fruits; and the very self-abnegation which could dispense with the honours, if only it could find the light, of knowledge,—nay, even the struggle to keep pace on foot with the well-mounted official guides on the road of truth,—favoured a manly, strenuous, and disinterested tone of mind, without which the most delicate scholarship becomes a lifeless personal accomplishment. Inheriting, moreover, the genius and traditions of the Genevan Reformation, the Nonconformist Colleges, like the Universities of Scotland, reducing the Pagan literature to a secondary place, threw all their earnest interest into the gravest problems of human nature and human life, and strengthened themselves chiefly on the side of philosophy and theology: so that their discipline produced, as in the case of Butler, Price, and Priestley, a certain power, precision, and flexibility of thought in dealing with moral, social, and metaphysical theories; and, as in the case of Jeremiah Jones and Lardner, a comprehensive and sympathetic insight into the early history and literature of Christianity. Accordingly, throughout the last and the present century, we find, in the best representatives of the Nonconformist laity, a taste for letters and art, a scientific curiosity, a breadth and firmness of political judgment, which have had their natural weight in spite of ungenial manners and unpopular opinions.

And if we compare, for the same period, the Bishops' requirements for ordination with the range of study for the young divine at Daventry, Homerton, Warrington, or York, we shall understand how it is that the most elementary discussions of Biblical criticism, which have long ago spent their effect elsewhere, and left the religion of thoughtful men purer than before, fall upon the English Church with the shock of novelty, and tear it between retreating superstition and hurrying negation.

Still, whatever partial merits these small Colleges may claim, no one would have devised them, or resorted to them, but for a necessity of conscience. They constituted a provisional service organized for a period of exile,—the little school-shed run up in the forest, because the queenly Alma Mater was out of humour, and had shut against us the gates of her intellectual metropolis. It is easy to see, in spite of some stately airs of reluctance and delay, that her relenting mood has come at last, and that the way will soon be open for our return; and it is a natural question, whether there will then be further occasion for special institutions like ours; or whether, with the removal of ecclesiastical barriers, all separate education ought not to merge in the great national schools of the higher culture. "You withdrew," we shall be reminded, "from Oxford and Cambridge, not because you did not like their teaching, but because you could not get it, so long as intolerant tests barred the way. You took your youth aside, not from any preference for learning in a corner, but because they could not pass into the throng without leaving honour on the threshold, or enter on the race but on unfair conditions. The times are changed, the tests are all but gone: why not disband your Colleges, turn their resources into scholarships, and send your young men to find their level among the mass of educated contemporaries and in the class-rooms of the *élite* of English teachers?"

This proposal is too rational not to demand, and too fascinating not to obtain, serious consideration; especially

as it only carries out to the last result a process already successfully begun. A policy, unique among Nonconformists, has been followed in regard to this Institution. Everywhere else they have shrunk from the experiment of mixed education, and in presence of great open Colleges here and in Manchester, have maintained and multiplied their purely denominational schools. The supporters of this Institution, on the other hand, removed it to London from express preference for mixed education, and cancelled all its functions except those of the theological faculty which University College did not supply. This, however, *is* supplied by the older Universities; and it becomes a question, whether, when they finally cease to shut us out, the last remnant of separate teaching should not be abandoned, our Divinity school be dissolved, and our students mingle undistinguished, like Hungarians or Swiss at Göttingen or Bonn, with those of other communions.

Among those who are afraid of mixed education, so bold a question could never be entertained. Their primary care is to create and fix a preconceived type of belief and character in the alumnus; their secondary, to infuse as much knowledge and accomplishment as may consist with this chief end. And if, even during the disciplinary studies of his undergraduate career, they think it requisite to keep him all to themselves, much more vigilantly will they insist on securing his mind when he reaches the Divinity school and launches on problems unfathomable and infinite. They will never send him where there is no guarantee that their scheme of doctrine will prevail with him; and their objection to trust their young divines to Oxford and Cambridge will be that Dr. Pusey is not an Independent, or Dr. Lightfoot a Baptist, and that Mr. Maurice is dangerously far from the Westminster divines. This kind of objection I wish emphatically to disclaim. It can have no weight with those who courageously embrace the principle of mixed education, and believe in the invigorating effect of a new atmosphere of thought, under which

the still life of habitual things assumes shifting forms and changing colours. What travelling scholar, in choosing his University abroad, would dream of inquiring whether at Jena he could be sure of a good Lutheran Professor, sound on the Real Presence, and at Berlin he should be protected from Rationalism, and at Heidelberg be kept right about the Fourth Gospel and the Incarnation? No sooner does he escape from our insular narrowness, and see before him the broad continent of European culture, than he asks only where he may learn most, and simply follows where the light may lead: warmed by the genius of Ewald, stimulated by the ingenuity of Volkmar, enriched by the learning of Hilgenfeld, aided by the judgment of Dorner, without even measuring their place on the great map of dogmatic opinion. The moment the opportunity is given him, he forgets the prejudices of ecclesiastical position and follows the intellectual instinct of the scholar; returning probably, after it has been satisfied, to his own place; but bringing into it a different presence, a mind and heart carried out beyond the stiff formulas of custom and tradition, to breathe a larger air, and bathe in a sweeter light, and gather a more gracious wisdom to be diffused around.

By sending our students in Arts into the class-rooms of University College, we have pronounced in favour of mixed education. By encouraging our Hibbert scholars to resort to the Universities of Germany, we directly extend the principle to *Theology*, and refuse, even in that field, to take security for the reproduction of our own opinions. It would seem to follow that if the rule is good for Leipzig or Tübingen, it must hold for Oxford and Cambridge. Are we then prepared to dissolve our only surviving faculty, and hand over our students to those more distinguished theological schools? Certainly not; and that for a reason purely Academic, and quite removed from all ecclesiastical fears or interests. Oxford and Cambridge are not like Leipzig and Tübingen; and the difference is this: that the former have to teach up to certain pre-determined results;

the latter, to teach whatever they find to be true. The former, that is to say, are there, not to educate, but to arrest education; the latter, to conduct the student to the present limits of the known, and exercise him in the method of advancing them into the unknown. This alone is Science; the other is the negation of Science; and all the erudition it may gather is but the ashes of a burnt-out fire, in which no flame of intellect and soul can live. There are two conditions of an open University. It is not enough that no one is turned back from the doors of its lecture-rooms: the Professors must be free to teach, as well as the students to learn; and until that is the case no less in the faculty of Theology, than in those of Law, Philology, and Physics, thoughtful men can only treat its pretensions as a venerable imposture, and it must yield the palm, as an instrument of culture, to the most modest school which honestly accepts the appointed conditions of intellectual and spiritual light. The Obscurantist never dies; but as he re-appears from age to age, he adroitly changes his mask and speech. In the days of Reuchlin and Erasmus, he set his face against the "new learning," as if he had some "old learning," instead of mere "*old ignorance*," to defend. His cry has now become "Denominational education," "Catholic Universities," "Anglican" schools, Presbyterian, Independent, Methodist Colleges:—devices all for showing things not as they are, but as he would like them to look, and for absorbing this or that element of the divine light, ere it reaches the eye, by intercepting and darkening media. The Sects and the Sciences do not admit of being classified together; the one being founded on subjective limitations of human thought, the other on distinctions present in the objective reality of things: and if a University is to be the orderly home of all knowledge, storing the present and with spaces for the future, if its organism is to reflect the whole intelligent effort of man to interpret the world, it must repudiate all alliance with ecclesiastical parties as a simple betrayal of its trust. The practical effect in this

country of such faithlessness in our Universities to their own idea I will describe in no words of my own, but in those of the distinguished Rector of Lincoln College, Oxford. Reviewing the schools of his own University, Mr. Mark Pattison excuses himself thus for passing by, in the silence of despair, the first in rank and in endowment. "The faculty of Theology must be considered in abeyance for purposes of education at present. There is indeed a scientific theology, and, in the Christian records of the early and later ages, the amplest material for various learning and critical investigation. But theology has not begun to exist as a science among us. In the present state of the public mind in this country, it is hopeless to propose to assign to it the place and rank which is its due. I must be content with having marked this place, as being side by side with the other schools which entitle, each of them, to a degree, and which have a defined course of studies leading up to that degree. But I cannot venture to propose what is obviously impossible. Theology will, I fear, in practice, continue to occupy its present degraded position of an extraneous appendage tacked on to the fag-end of every examination in every other subject. In this respect the academical traditions of the sixteenth century, when all education was theological, have been continued into our day, partly from mere habit, partly with the idea that, by thrusting in theology into every examination, we were making education religious, as the Puritans of a former age imagined, that by the employment of Scripture phraseology they sanctified common conversation."*

* "Suggestions on Academical Organization, with especial reference to Oxford," pp. 319, 320. This little book, remarkable as a lucid picture of Oxford in its present constitution and usages, handles the whole problem of University reconstruction with a breadth and firmness truly impressive. Its suggestions are probably too bold and comprehensive for early adoption. But meanwhile the ideal which they present cannot be contemplated without a purifying effect upon English prejudices, and an enlarged appreciation of the University as a function of the national life.

Here, then, is our answer to those who say, "The old Universities will be open immediately: dissolve your College, and send your students there, where there are schools, not of Arts alone, but of Divinity too." We cannot send them to a place where "the faculty of Theology must be considered in abeyance for the present." And here is our plea for still attaching some value to our own school: that, however inadequate its division of labour, however imperfect the competency of its teachers, when measured by the intellectual resources of the continental seats of learning, it at least (and, so far as I know, *alone*) incorporates their principle, and serves, till better days, as an asylum for the hunted and banished idea of "a scientific theology." No pledges, actual or implied, are asked from the professors, except for the faithful devotion of their faculties, in the respective provinces assigned them, to the search and communication of truth. No question is asked of the student, except the practical one as to his choice of a mode of life; and *that* as a condition, not of his instruction, but of the benefaction which saves him its cost. Nor in its lectures is there anything which might not be transposed to an auditorium at Berlin or Halle, with no other effect than that of sinking into the shade beside the brilliant expositions of distinguished teachers. This function, of saving, till the floods of party delusion subside, the idea and example of "a scientific theology," is the solitary claim I put forth for this College. I know that the claim is derided by outside observers who judge all human projects by the complexion of their subscription lists. I am not surprised that it is unappreciated by those who think of all theologies as so many party manifestoes. The English mind is vitiated through and through by the identification of religion with partizan opinions. But the procession of new orthodoxies cannot be eternal; and if only a few men will but hold fast to the assurance that the truth about divine things is to be found on similar conditions with the truth about human and cosmical, the higher spirits will at

last return, and find that they gain no genuine light and sacredness till they are beyond the hootings of the Church crowd.

Is there, however, such a thing as "*a scientific theology*"? For I find its possibility questioned from quite another side; not by those who have too narrow a conception of religion, but by those who have too narrow a conception of science. It is one of the most curious effects of the brilliant and rapid advance of physical research in modern times, that it has absorbed to itself alone the meaning of the word "Science," and forced its own language and conceptions, as if the intellect had no other instrument or work, upon the whole field of human thought. Pronounce the word "Science" before an English crowd, and in not one man out of a hundred will it call up any notion but of astronomy, geology, chemistry, optics, and other partial interpretations of the outer world; and if it be the educated crowd, gathered in the halls of the British Association recently assembled at Norwich, in not one of a thousand. In this restricted sense, undoubtedly, Theology is no "Science"; along this path, if that were all, its Infinite Object is not apprehensible; and I cannot wonder that the eminent and high-minded President of the Association, speaking from this exclusive point of view, sanctioned with his great authority the dictum that religion deals only with the inscrutable, and can make no terms with science, except by unconditional surrender of the whole field of intelligence, and withdrawal into the dark; and that "if the two would work in harmony, both parties must beware how they fence with that *most dangerous of all two-edged weapons*, Natural Theology; a science falsely so called, when, not content with trustfully accepting truths hostile to any presumptuous standard it may set up, it seeks to weigh the infinite in the balance of the finite, and shifts its ground to meet the requirements of every new fact that science establishes and every old error that science exposes. Thus pursued," it is said, "natural theology is to the scientific man a delusion

and to the religious man a snare, leading too often to disordered intellects and to atheism."*

In this latest indictment of the scientific against the religious intellect, the distinguished botanist† has surely expressed himself with less than his usual precision. Two voices seem to sound through these sentences,—one which denounces *all* natural theology, another which denounces only *bad* natural theology, and thereby allows the possibility of a better. In declaring the Power behind the world absolutely inscrutable, the speaker cuts off all passage from nature to God, and unconditionally excludes *all* "natural theology," as necessarily illusory in its very aim and essence. Yet instantly, as if in recoil from the strength of his own charge, he softens his tone to this dangerous impostor, and makes it a false science only when it misbehaves itself, in a way which he proceeds to describe. And what is the disqualifying offence to which it is said to be prone? (1) That it will not accept discovered truths which displace its preconceptions; (2) that it is always shifting its ground to meet the requirements of new facts as they are established. As one part of this misconduct consists in rejecting, and the other in admitting, new truths; one in holding by an obsolete universe, the other in moving onwards through the opening fields, they cannot both be committed by the same culprit at the same time; and, since the only way of avoiding each is to enact the other, the first cannot be wrong unless the second is right. If any "natural theologian" sets up a "presumptuous standard," and obstinately refuses to see the fresh spaces explored beyond it, let him by all means be condemned; not, however, for his "theology," but for his "presumption" and his prejudice; for his irreverent preference of his own dreams to the Divine order he pretends to seek. But if your rebuke shames him into repentance, and he flings his "presumptuous standard" away, and advances his

* Report of President's Address: *Athenæum* for August 22, 1868.

† Sir Joseph Hooker.

position to the front, with what consistency can you turn round upon him with the reproach that he has run away from the "old errors" and is occupying the "new truth"? What would the Theist be worth, if he were *not* for ever shifting his ground, and widening his program; letting the Jewish "firmament" open, and release his thought into the real vault of night; reconstructing his petty chronometry, and learning to count by the beats of geologic time; dropping from his imagination the successive starts and paroxysms of creation, and substituting the eternal thinking-out of the Universal Order along the quiet steps of law? The very test of his fundamental conception is, whether it permits him to shift his ground fast enough without parting company with it; whether it is flexible enough to bend and move with the rapid curves of advancing knowledge: or whether, on the other hand, polarized light, or the waves of sound, or the magnetic current, or the cellular architecture, are impossible modes of action for a Living Will. How can it be an offence in the natural theologian to say of these things, "I embrace them all; for me they make a far better and diviner world than the poor little peep-show of Genesis or the Timæus; and He of whose mind all the modern sciences are the partial reflection is to me an auguster being than Jehovah or Zeus?" With what sense or justice can you tell him that his study, "thus pursued, leads too often to disordered intellects and atheism?" and yet not tell him how, otherwise pursued, it may consist with sanity and theism? To class atheism with madness and to hold it up in terror and in warning, is to treat it as a disastrous illusion, into which it is pitiable to fall. But it can be so only in proportion as the truth which it denies is important and accessible to a reasonable mind. The path (wherever it may be) of legitimate access to that truth is "natural theology"; and to shut up the approaches, yet frighten you for missing the goal, is surely an inconsistency which would be more in place in a council of the church than in a hall of the philosophers.

Probably we shall best reach the real meaning of the indictment, if we let its qualifying clauses fall away, and take it in its unconditional form, as charging absolute nullity upon all natural theology, however it may behave. And if by this be meant that there is no place for it among the Inductive Sciences, and that the cognitive powers and methods which help us to our Physics and Chemistry are incompetent to carry us on to Religion, I am not disposed to controvert (though, to render it exact, I should wish to qualify) the proposition. The objects of Natural knowledge are the phenomena which we notice by outward perception, and which we group into laws by attention to their differences and succession; and if this were all the work for which our intellect is fitted, we certainly could never apprehend a Divine nature which is beyond phenomena, and is the ground of all their laws. But, I must submit, it is a very inadequate reckoning of the cognitive resources of the human mind, which limits them to the inductive faculties; and nothing can be more unwarrantable than to pronounce an object unknowable simply because *they* are unable to reach it. We are made capable of knowing, not only that which happens, but that which is; not only phenomena, but existences; not only laws, but causation: and this additional knowledge not only is just as certain as the other, but actually underlies it as its condition, and has to be assumed in every inductive proposition. Space, for example, infinite Space, is no phenomenon, and no law of phenomena, but a necessary existence, of which we have more absolute assurance than of any physical changes occurring within it. Causal Power again is no phenomenon, and is more than the law of phenomena: it evades your senses, which notice only the changes which take place; it evades your registering memory, which can record only their order of succession: yet you so believe in it, that you cannot speak of a natural fact without assuming it; the language of all physical sciences is steeped in the conception of it; and the whole tissue of relations among them is

woven by the dynamical idea. These interpreting ideas, not inductively reached, but furnished by the intellect itself as organizing principles for its experience, no one can help accepting as exponents of reality, and treating as a part of his knowledge. They are the sources of his deductions (as Geometry works out the idea of Space), without being the result of his inductions. Even therefore within the limits of physical knowledge, the mind is introduced to existences, real and not phenomenal, which are no part of its scientific discovery, yet which form the very cement of its conceptions, and deserve whatever trust belongs to the primary conditions of intelligence itself.

Among the existences thus disclosed in the very structure of our faculties, only half-hid till the moral nature speaks, is the Divine. Conscience is as much a human fact as Reason and Perception, and is no less entitled to be believed on its word. And if there is anything invariably clear in its utterance, it is this: that we live under an authority above us, speaking in the law of right and wrong, and wielding our compunctions as ministers of justice; therefore, from the very nature of authority, under a Living Will transcending our personality and communing with it. The Divine rule over life is no less correlated to the Moral faculty, than the existence of an external world to the Perceptive; and as there is no difference in the nature of their evidence, so are they held with equal cogency of natural belief, wherever men are found: and they first come into question together, when the mind's intuitive reliances are corroded by the action of false metaphysics. Under such artificial influence, you may dispute the validity of the natural revelation; you may construe the world and God into Matter and Force; but with no result beyond the exchange of full and concrete assumptions for abstract and empty ones: for of matter and force you know nothing except on the very same tenure on which others hold the ideas you reject; and on whatever grounds you call the interpretation of the universe by Dead Force a *science*, on

the same must its interpretation by Living Force be a science too. The different choice of an interpreting conception entitles neither expositor to excommunicate the other, and banish him into the outer darkness. Natural theology then, I must contend, is a perfectly legitimate exercise of the human intellect. It simply carries over into the natural world that idea of a Living Will at the heart of things, which it has found chiefly in the moral world; and tries how it will fit the cosmical scene, and adjust itself to the natural laws, which thus far the scientific surveyors have laid open. Far from denying anything which they have found, such an interpreter necessarily adopts it all, as the very material on which he works. His account of the origin of things in no way contradicts theirs, but simply includes it; flinging around their field, which is limited to the detection of method, the embracing idea of intellectual purpose, and interfusing an omnipresent Thought with the working powers which they have found. He accepts in full their report of how things came about, and realize the ends we see; he only adds by way of caution—"You have found the laws of countless phenomena before unreduced; be content with this, and dream not that you have dispossessed their Cause. Once upon the track of their order, you can tell the issue of this or that, long before it comes. But that these *ends resulting* are *not ends contemplated* is more than you can ever show: that they necessarily arise from their antecedents, only proves that they were not contemplated without being provided for; came they from Fate, or came they from pre-disposing Thought, this is an aspect which they must in any case present." While I thus vindicate a place among the recognized applications of the intellect for Natural Theology, I must confess the retribution not surprising, if, after centuries of stupid obstruction from the divines, the men of science, in the exulting consciousness that their day has come, are tempted to break bounds, and to direct a reactionary scorn upon the philosophic theologian; whose province, however, they would

more happily distinguish from their own, did they not include metaphysics in their contempt.

The occupation, then, of the moralist and theologian is not yet gone; and would not be in the smallest degree affected, though the palæontologist could actually show under the microscope the very type of parent-cell from which, through myriad links in natural history, the human race has sprung. The facts of personal life, of moral obligation, of social ties, of ideal aims, of religious intuition, are not altered, or made unworthy of intellectual treatment, by any previous development of the organism in which they appear. They remain phenomena *sui generis*, which no physiological record of corporeal antecedents, however refined and perfect it might be, would enable you to predict: they cannot be got under the object-glass of any optical instrument: they are known, and must for ever be known, only subjectively, through the consciousness of the human race, whether immediately, by silent individual reflection, or mediately, by expression in language, in law, in literature, in the usages of the state and the worship of the temple. The systematic study of these things, with a view to disengage the purest truth attainable respecting the Divine relations of man, is what we mean by Scientific Theology; "*theology*," because a right apprehension of God is its end; "*scientific*," because in handling the materials, resort is had to an orderly plan and approved critical methods.

Though the classification of studies on which we proceed in this College has been determined partly by its practical object as a training school for ministers, partly by an economy of personal aptitudes in the teachers, it appears to me to be not deficient in scientific propriety and convenience. If we are to begin, as good sense requires, with the *better known*, our point of departure must necessarily be the type of moral and religious civilization which is present in our world to-day, whose life is before us, whose ideas are within us, and which, whether consciously or uncon-

sciously, we shall carry with us as our measure into the critique of other forms. The Christian religion then, looked at as a realized spiritual fact, the nearest and best known, and, provisionally at least, the highest in the world, occupies, not only justly but inevitably, the centre and main portion of the field. No object, however, can be judged of when seen insulated and alone; but only when struck by the crossing lights of various comparison, be it of contrast with foreign objects, or of partial similitude among the successive stages of its own growth. Hence the immense importance, and the vast scope, of the *historical theology* which engages two Professorships, and occupies the just primacy, in this place. Conceived in its whole extent, it would amount to a comparative history and critical survey of the religions of mankind, wherever they find distinctive expression in literature or life: under the limitations imposed by practical exigencies, it works out its object with special fulness all down the historical line of the Jewish and Christian faiths, with such collateral notices of other theologies as may at once clear the characteristics, and exhibit the affinities, of the main thread of light. So great is the apparatus of erudition involved in this survey, that in too many teachers it has overwhelmed the spiritual faculties, buried out of sight the end in view, and simply choked the well of life with a mass of learned dust: but it is wielded with ease, and applied with enriching power, where the ripe tact of the scholar and the copious resources of the historical critic are simply at the service of quickened Christian affections and a supreme love of truth. The two biblical languages with their dialectic modifications, the whole series of biblical texts, with the history of their origin and transmission, the interpretation of their meaning, the testing of their recorded facts, the appreciation of their laws, their poetry, their *vaticinia*, the tracing through them of their growing religious idea, the reconstruction from them of their lost forms of life, are included in the program of this department. Yet these are but its first

section : for they bring us no further than the date of the literature itself; and it has run through time with an unmeasured and ever multiplying power, which makes its effects greater than itself, and more in need of voluminous exposition. The Christian Church in its rise, from a mere section in the synagogue or the proseucha, to a consolidated spiritual power dominating the civilized world; and again in its Protestant dispersion into varieties, irrigating new fields of thought, reaching the latent seeds of fresh growth, and, while outwardly falling to pieces, becoming by inward penetration more catholic than before;—presents a marvellous spectacle which no dry chronicler or ecclesiologist can exhibit, but only an expositor who has access to the deepest springs of art and philosophy, of human aspiration and human trust.

Large and various as are the contents of historical theology, they do not, however, find for us our point of final rest. They present a crowd of significant phenomena which must be passed before the mind mainly in the order of time; and though incidentally the mixed multitude may be sifted out into its more or less pure elements by the comment of a philosophical expositor, he is too busy with pushing on the movement of his materials to pause in quest of their ultimate interpretation, or critically to establish his own critical tests. It remains to contemplate the whole of these phenomena in another light; as a language of manifestation expressive of the *religious nature and faculties of man;* and to seek the final roots and essential validity of those beliefs, which work out for themselves so august, so various, at one time so benign, at another so terrible a history. Only by a critique of human nature itself, by an analysis of its intrinsic capabilities, can the last principles be gained which may serve as criteria of religious truth, and justify the limits we assign to the retention of traditional beliefs. There is therefore a *philosophical theology* needed to supplement the historical. It is essentially a psychology; which, in tracing the higher

beliefs to their genesis, untwines from them the threads of accident, and discharges the colours of illusion, and lays bare the golden fibre of their imperishable texture. Were the religion of man due to a special faculty, of insulated function, the range of this investigation would be inconsiderable, and would fill but a chapter in the descriptive analysis of the human mind. But the elements of even the simplest faith are contributed from all sides of our nature; ideas of Causation, of Beauty, of Right, of Truth, all mingle in our conception of the Divine, and leave it only partially pursued to its ground, till our scrutiny has been carried through the whole circle of perceptive, logical, affectional and moral faculties. To distinguish a prejudice from an axiom, we must know the laws of legitimate intellectual action; to avoid confounding an abstraction of thought with a reality of being, we must read our mental experience aright, and not transpose the elements and the products of its history. To decide whether duty is a refinement of interest and sympathy, or speaks with a distinct voice of its own, and whether compunction is a reflected image of the public anger or an indigenous notice of violated obligation, we must discriminate, by the most rigorous tests, the primitive material from the fabricated structure of our moral life. Whilst we hear all the religious phenomena explained away, on the one hand, as a tissue of artificial associations, spreading over the face of things a veil of illusion which is destined to dissolve like the ghosts already gone, and claimed, on the other hand, as the expression of native insight into things as they are, given us by the necessary postulates of reason and conscience; is it not evident that the last controversy is already passing on to the psychological field; and that on the self-interpretation of human nature depends the continued recognition of the Divine? Were it possible that the analyses of Thought and Will now prevalent in the schools should prove final, and that nothing should be found behind the current Logic of science, we should be living in the last age of Theology,

and it would scarcely need another step for its self-knowledge to overbalance into self-extinction. Since, however, our "modern thought" does not solve, but only despair of the haunting problems of "Metaphysics," since again it makes no provision for any primary truths, but makes all our mental stores alike derivative,—and *that* from sensible experiences common to us with the brutes,—it may be surmised that intellectual curiosity may yet rise in discontent and reclaim its natural range; that the device will not permanently succeed of shutting up vast chambers of human thought and labelling them "empty"; and that the relation between our phenomenal knowledge and what lies beyond it may be reconstrued, and lifted into a real relation, neither inscrutable nor insignificant. If so, there is a future still for philosophical theology; and the death with which, from the time of Epicurus to that of Comte, it has been so often threatened by the expositors of natural laws and molecular hypotheses, will yet be post-poned. "Modern thought" is strong; but ancient trusts are stronger; and with the vigour of eternal youth they will re-assert their moral power, as the inexhaustible springs of noble and reverent action, and vindicate their intellectual place, as the immovable basis of any satisfying philosophy.

WHY DISSENT?

PREFACE.

THE vindication of Dissent contained in the following Address will be understood by my readers to be simply moral and historical, and will not, I trust, be mistaken for a declaration of political opinion with regard to impending ecclesiastical questions. It implies no approval of the policy of "Disestablishment," and no disapproval of the aim at a comprehensive National Church system. Indeed, but for my large agreement with Mr. Matthew Arnold's judgments on these points, I should have less regretted his habitual disparagement of the Nonconformist history and spirit. Among the various causes which have recently abated the hope of any National union for religious ends, not the least powerful, I fear, may be found in the Prefaces to "Culture and Anarchy" and "St. Paul and Protestantism." And the more I honour the genius and high purpose of their author, the more do I lament any needless resistance which their historical misappreciations may unintentionally provoke.

LONDON, OCTOBER 16, 1871.

IX.

WHY DISSENT ?*

In the early days of English Nonconformity, its leaders assumed their position with reluctance, and readily owned that it required apology. It was a secession from partnership in the national life at its highest point; nay, it turned into an occasion of disunion that force of reverence which chiefly blends the conflicting wills of men into one social system. The responsibility of such act of separation was not to be incurred without a clear moral necessity: no personal distaste, no disappointed preference, no self-will which might be sacrificed, could for a moment be pleaded in defence: against these the claim of the common sentiment was a conclusive answer, which, if resisted, left the imputation proved of ungenial temper and wanton schism. Nothing short of a supreme obligation, directly imposed from the Source of all duty, could release from the secondary authority of society and the Commonwealth, and warrant retreat into exceptional modes of religious life. Hence the elder Nonconformists were always anxious to show that some positive Divine ordinance stood in the way of their compliance with the ecclesiastical rule of their country; that they did not resist the public order of religion, so long as it enacted nothing *ultra vires;* but that the sacrifice which they would freely make of their

* Opening of Session, Manchester New College, London. October, 1871.

private fancies could not be applied to matters already put out of their power by the will of God. They thus admitted an antecedent obligation on the citizens to all possible moral and religious unity; the right of the nation to strive towards this unity in its authorized Church system; the guilt of disobedience on trivial and egotistic grounds: and they rested their case on the single plea, that the Act of Uniformity mistook the terms of Christian communion, and required conditions at variance with the pure and primitive model. So soon as the State should discover its mistake, and ask nothing which the Head of the Church had not imposed, their excuse for isolation would be taken away, and they would be bound to fall into their place in the spiritual organism of their country. In accordance with this view of their position, the Puritan exiles from the English Church, regarding their expulsion as temporary, gave to their separate institutions a provisional character only, and assumed a waiting attitude till the closed door should be re-opened to them; resorting still for their education to the public schools and colleges which remained accessible to them, with perhaps some supplementary years at Utrecht or Leyden; maintaining their civic place by "occasional conformity"; and relying for the theological instruction of their intellectual classes on an almost private system of Academical teaching on the part of their leading ministers. At every possible point, every point from which they were not driven by inhibitory law, they long retained their contact with the national sources of culture and habits of action; and it was only when a generation had passed in disappointed hope, and the Revolution finally gave them "*Toleration*," but refused them *re-admission*, that they sorrowfully accepted their attitude of isolation, and laid the foundation of integral churches and schools for a separate people. For nearly two centuries these institutions have been allowed to grow and gather round them the bequests of the dead and the attachment of the living; till their

scale has attained a national and their duration an historical importance; and they have set into a form which renders their re-absorption into the established ecclesiastical system as it is, plainly impossible. Yet this is the time chosen by one of our most accomplished poets and brightest of critics, for censuring the history, deriding the character, and even impugning the moral right of our Nonconformity; and for inviting us to relinquish the life of outside barbarians, and seek a late entrance into the inner circle of English culture and religion.* As this invitation is not without support from many tendencies of our age, from the fading of old distinctions and the fusing power of new beliefs, from the widening scope of modern education and the dislike of nursed and narrow types of mind, and (must I not add?) from relaxed vigour of public veracity, it may be reasonable to consider, whether it is time for our Nonconformity to cease; or whether there is yet a work to be done, and a testimony to be borne, which justify the continued function of such a College as I represent to-day.

The quarrel between the Anglican and the Puritan resolves itself into the difference between a *sacerdotal* and a *personal* Christianity; the one relying on the mediation of priest and sacrament; the other, on the *immediateness* of individual faith. It seems to be admitted that between these two, so long as each doctrine was a living reality, harmonious co-existence was impossible; but, since neither of them can now be seriously regarded as essential, or, indeed, as more than a "human development," they ought, it is said, to make reciprocal concessions, and shelter their equal rights under the common adoption of the State. Sacerdotalism and Solifidianism, gaining nothing by their internecine war, may as well come to terms, and, as joint instructors of the nation in spiritual things, divide the functions and aspects of religion between them. Since

* "St. Paul and Protestantism," by Matthew Arnold, M.A. LL.D., Preface, pp. xx–xxv.

both are already found side by side in the parishes of the same diocese, in the debates of Convocation, and in the ecclesiastical literature which keeps an impartial shelf for Newton and Simeon, Pusey and Keble, the hindrance, it is urged, is evidently not in any constitutional exclusion; but lies wholly in the will of the Dissenter, in his political churlishness, his narrow sympathies, and his preference for institutions of his own invention to those of national scope.*

The proposal for putting an end to the impertinence of Nonconformity assumes that it is no longer the guardian of any considerable religious principle; and that even its early zeal gave an overstrained importance to words and usages which, if left unchallenged, would have remained innocuous. Nowhere, however, is illusion more easy than in measuring the magnitude of religious differences; and the estimate, to be of any value, must be made *from the interior, i.e.* by one to whom the objects of faith, and affection are *real*, and the disputed propositions respecting them are *definitely true* or *definitely false*. If, instead of this, the appreciation is attempted by the critic from an exterior position, it is inevitable that all the actual beliefs, being treated as mere varieties of subjective sentiment, alike without objective significance, should seem to present no difference worth a serious sacrifice. From his point of view, Religion is only a popular form of culture, exercising the ideal faculties in various ways, and suffusing life with colours of solemn or tender sentiment: he sees in it only such differences as separate the several forms of eloquence and poetry,—Drama and Lyric, Epic and Elegy; and with his attention arrested by the symbol while shrinking from the thing symbolized, it is no wonder that he is similarly affected by opposite expressions of piety, and finds nothing but what is trivial in intervals of meaning which to

* "St. Paul and Protestantism," Preface, pp. xxvi, xxvii; "Puritanism and the Church of England," pp. 58, 59; "Culture and Anarchy," Preface, pp. xliii, xliv.

others are impassable. The affections towards God are strictly *personal affections;* the relations to Him which are recognized in worship are intimate realities, not less clear and living than those which men sustain to one another. On this assumption all the language and life of Churches are founded; and where the Divine Name has lost this meaning, and its essence is discharged as an anthropomorphic superstition, the whole matter of Religion disappears; and the arbitrator who pronounces on its disputes from such foreign point of view understands the position of neither party. An inevitable defect of sympathy is liable to impair the judgment of the simply literary or neutral observer of religious phenomena, and distort for him their actual intervals and affinities. Looking, for example, on the surplice as a frock, and the mitre as a cap, and the Collect or the Litany as a fancied incantation, he thinks it folly to care about such trifles, and sighs over the wasted passion they excite. Where no living communion is supposed to exist in Worship, no interchange of human aspiration and Divine response, and prayer is resolved into mere soliloquy, it is natural enough that with the reality should vanish also the scrupulosity of devotion; for it is but a small thing for one man to concede this or that to the soliloquy of another, or even to read for others the rhapsody which is alien to himself: he is dealing only with his fellows; and their momentary misunderstanding of his complaisance he can easily correct by subsequent explanation. Nothing so lubricates the ethics of Conformity as to reduce public offices of piety to a mutual social engagement, in which men can agree to give and take, and the measure of right may be voted in and out as humours change. But this is to blend religions by dissolving them; to force charity by artificial heat to blossom at the head while leaving the frost to kill it at the root. Even as an element in the discipline of a man's character, every such departure from simplicity is hurtful to his reverence and veracity. And whoever is still possessed by

the Puritan feeling, and stands in prayer before the All-Holy Presence, is powerless to pretend or to recite or to lie; he cannot shape his lips except to the thing which is, or seek harmony with the infinitely True by becoming the organ of the consciously false. Thus it is inevitable that the measures of religious interval should look quite different from within and from without; and though it is but too possible for sects and schools to exaggerate things of slight significance, and nurse their own peculiarities, and lose all largeness of sympathy and apprehension, it is no less common for the external observer to extend his satire of these faults to other characteristics, arising from a true spiritual insight.

Now, estimate as we may other and secondary hindrances to religious union, there are two impassable barriers in the way of conformity on the part of such liberal Puritanism as this College represents: we cannot join a *Sacerdotal* Church: we cannot join a *Solifidian* Church; still less can we join a Church which, heedless of the contradiction, manages to be both. Mr. Arnold admits that between the beliefs which these words express, the antipathy is irremediable; but, under inspiration of the *Zeitgeist*, he finds them both to be erroneous; whence the natural inference would seem to be that both should take themselves away at opposite doors of retreat. Our critic, however, concludes that they should both of them stay and be friends, or at least sleep side by side, like dead enemies buried in the same tomb. It is evident that their antipathy is not less from their truth becoming more doubtful; and our assent is not made easier by showing that the proposition offered to us is false. In the condescending patronage extended by modern "culture" towards religious conceptions which it does not embrace, there is a curious inversion of the old rigour and simplicity. We used to think that the measure of mischief in a wrong belief was its distance from the truth, and that we should be most patient of error that east distorts the real. But, to judge from the growing

literary habit of mild compliment to extreme superstition, and supercilious scorn towards mere overstrained truths, it would seem to be supposed that the extravagantly false is the completely innocent, and that in the outer region of nonsense you may make your bow all round, and smile on every well-meant absurdity. The ancient veracity has not yet so lost its nerve as to be subdued by the grand air of these benevolences. So long as its Sacramental principle remains, the Established Church rests upon a theory of religion utterly at variance with all the residuary varieties of Puritan faith, and amounting as many of us conceive, to a reversal of the very essence of Christianity; for it intercepts that *immediateness of relation* between the human spirit and the Divine which is the distinctive boon of Jesus to the world; and it reinstates that resort to *mediation* and "channels of grace," and magically-endowed men, which it was his special aim to sweep away and render impossible. It cannot be denied that the opposition between these two conceptions is fundamental; that it justified the protest of the Puritans and Quakers against the Church of Andrewes, Laud, and Parker; and why not then our prolonged resistance, seeing that not one pretension of prelacy has been withdrawn, and that never since that age have priestly doctrines, and usages, and tastes, advanced with so bold a front as now? How can we, whose whole gospel lies in the intimate personal access of each soul to God, play with the language of absolution, affect to be organs for the remission of sins, or stand by while others profess to take the obstacles away which neutralize the everlasting love? As it would be an imposture in us to assume the possession of supernatural functions for the divine governance of men, so would it be a faithless hypocrisy silently to sanction their assumption by others; and while so many Christians and Englishmen rest on the simple, filial, immediate relation of the soul to God, we can acknowledge neither the Catholicity nor the Nationality of a Church which makes its ministers "Priests,"

turns its rites into spells, and gives efficacy in its Eucharist to an act of sacrificial mediation.

But, apart from the sacerdotalism of the Church which repels all the descendants of Puritanism, its whole theory of religion,—of human ruin by nature, and select rescue by faith,—forbids the approach of those to whom it presents an utterly false picture of the universe, its author, and its moral government. A worship which begins with the abjectness of man before the terror of God, and is lifted thence only by foreign deliverance, and ends with a borrowed righteousness, fails to reach the springs of conscience, to satisfy the needs of devout affection, or relieve the shadows of life with lights of intelligible trust. It is true that, side by side with this imaginary drama of perdition and salvation, we find fragments of nobler and more natural faith, and hear, rising from the midst, occasional strains of a bright and tender piety. But for Church communion it is not enough that here and there the mind can flow in with a note of harmony, if the theme as a whole, and the genius of the place, are out of tune with the inward thought: and who can pretend that the theological economy presented in the teachings and services of the Church is compatible with the scientific knowledge, or the moral sense, or the ideal aspirations, of this age of the world? or even with that supremacy of *Righteousness* in which Mr. Arnold himself discovers the essence of the Gentile Gospel?* Is it just, then, to taunt us with our separation, and invite us to close our "Philistine" conventicles and obscure Colleges, and go with the majority to the Church and the older Universities? Surely he forgets, what we also inadequately remember, that the religious acts of life are simply the expression of supreme reverence and inmost conviction, and in the absence of these are only simulated, *i.e.* are just turned into their contraries, and become profaneness and irreligion. "Optimi corruptio pessima est": the infusion of insincerity into the

* "St. Paul and Protestantism," p. 97, seqq.

highest action of the soul reduces it to one of the lowest; and would make us *dead* members of the Church to which we seem to belong. Hence the necessity laid upon us, not less in the present than in the past, of accepting our position of exiles, and going apart for freedom of religious education and genuineness of religious service. We have no honourable option. It is a question of a withering away of the spiritual life, or of its ampler unfolding in a more sequestered but congenial field.

Must we then accept as our inevitable portion the consequences which are charged upon our Puritan severity? It is said to take us out of the current of the national life; to leave us without share in its literature, its characteristic exploits, its favourite traditions; and to condemn us to the position of ξένοι amid a native polity and civilization. Accordingly no great name, we are assured, has entered from the Puritan side on the roll of English art or letters; and the history of our country unfolds its drama with no signal appearance, except in the background, of actors from the Nonconformist camp. The only "fruitful men" that have stepped forth thence,—Milton, Baxter, Wesley,—were themselves the offspring of the Establishment with which they were dissatisfied. On the whole, a moral contraction and intellectual blight seem to fall on the votaries of a "*hole-and-corner*" *Christianity*.*

Even before examining this plausible reproach, may we not say that it comes with an unbecoming cruelty from those who have shut against us, as long and as far as possible, all the public provisions for culture; who have monopolized the great schools, the universities, and their colleges; have obstructed access to the professions; and till within living memory have held exclusive possession of the municipalities, the magistracy, and virtually the legislature. Be it ever so true that some provincial narrowness and austerity are noticeable in the genius of a people, who for a whole generation were forbidden to keep school, were driven from

* "Culture and Anarchy": Preface, pp. xx., xxiv.

the towns, were imprisoned for publishing books, were denied the right of meeting and the exercise of their religion, and have ever since been treated as interlopers in English society, and usurpers of spiritual functions which do not belong to them: with what grace can they be upbraided for their defects by a representative of the dominant party? To be thrust into "holes and corners," and then derided for being there,—to be put on intellectual low diet, and then satirized for having long faces and spare looks, is a kind of treatment little likely to win us to the compassionate critic's "Sweetness and Light." *

But is this appreciation of Puritanism true? Not without qualifications which leave only a slender residue of fact. In the earliest period, when the recent Tudor settlement of the Crown and the Prelacy was overstrained and gave way in the hands of the Stuarts, the patriots of the Civil War and the great men of the Commonwealth, who, being the "*rebels*," were certainly the "*nonconformists*" of their day, were not simply "in contact with the current of national life," but swelled its stream and altered its channel; so that even to speak of England without them,—to form an image of its people, of its towns, of its county society, even of its landscape, apart from all reference to them, is simply impossible. They brought new elements to the national character, and, while the enthusiasm was at white heat, welded them by firm blows into the general mass. It is said they did not *quit* the Church, but *changed* it, and so were embraced still by a national system and were affected by its largeness. In the first place, the assertion has no valid application to a time when there was no fixed order in ecclesiastical affairs, and Episcopalians, Presbyterians and Independents, all found their way into the parish pulpits. And, in the second place, the same plea will hold for the Nonconformists now: for they too are not without their conception of a best organization of religion in the nation, and their constant aim to bring it about. In that organiza-

* "Culture and Anarchy," pp. 23–30.

tion they propose to do their duty, and to bear their part as a responsible and recognized constituent of the whole; and it is only in the process of transition to a general settlement, just as in the Puritan struggle under Charles I., that they are isolated by Episcopalian pre-occupation of the national field. There is no obvious right by which the old Catholic constituents of English society, which rallied round the Royal Standard in the Civil War, should claim to be the essence of the national life, and should leave the Puritan element to stand outside as something foreign. And as little is there reason for arrogating an exclusive national character to the Established Church, and virtually expatriating the Dissenters as spiritually homeless in the land.

The place of Milton in English literature ought, one would think, to protect Nonconformity from the reproach of intellectual barbarism or defect of large and liberal learning; for nowhere is the genius of dissentient and even solitary religion more marked than in him. He was brought up, however, we are reminded, under an established system, and carried its affluence of resource into his more isolated position; as Baxter also did, and Wesley. If the rule is to be read thus, we cannot refuse to accept its converse application also; and Butler, who gained his education and his first philosophical reputation at Samuel Jones's Academy at Gloucester and Tewkesbury, must be surrendered (with his fellow-student, Secker, the Archbishop) to the Nonconformist roll of honour. Unless poets, historians and humorists alone, are to stand as representatives of culture, the exclusive claim for the Established Church of an interest in English literature is rash and inconsiderate; and as Mr. Arnold is proud of Butler, and reckons Baxter and Wesley among his "*fruitful*" men, we cannot suspect him of so narrow an interpretation, or suppose that, in the most recent style of supercilious criticism, he discharges theology and philosophy from the list of intellectual pursuits, and takes them as witnesses to ignorance instead of forms of educated thought. Doubt-

less it was into these channels that the earnest and meditative Puritans predominantly directed their mental activity; not without results bearing honourable proportions to their numbers and their opportunities. In French and German historical notices of ethical and metaphysical philosophy, it is rare to find any English names since the time of Locke, except those of Price, Hutcheson and Priestley, all of them lights of Nonconformity; unless it be that Hartley and Bentham also appear, both of them recusants of the Church tests. And if in the libraries of English theology there are any volumes on the shelves bearing more weighty and erudite names than those of Baxter, Owen, Lardner, Jones, Taylor, Doddridge, Priestley, Davidson, I have yet to learn what they are. Nay, it was when the Universities were under Independent rule that the English Church itself acquired, in the "*Latitude-men*," perhaps the purest lustre of her moral history: her own genius alone, but for the stimulating touch of Puritanism, would not have nursed into their rich power the minds of Whichcote, Cudworth, Smith, and More; or have inspired the sweet and saintly persuasion (second only to that of the *Theologia Germanica*), which, as a negociator of peace and virtual Dissenter though an unwilling Bishop in Scotland, Leighton poured forth at Dunblane and Glasgow. And unless the natural sciences are to be struck out from the constituents of national culture, it is due to the Independents to remember that under their rule the Royal Society arose at Oxford in 1645, and continued its meetings in Wadham College till 1659: it was thus a birth of the Puritan Commonwealth, reserved for later "Royal" adoption. And who that calls to mind the chief epochs of subsequent discovery, and duly ranges along the history the contributions to it of Priestley, Dalton, Faraday, Lyell and Lassell, can deny that science has fairly vindicated its independence and religious impartiality, and refused to be made the peculium of a national establishment? Nor is there any want, in the field of literature proper, of such partnership

in the intellectual life of our English tongue as may prevent its being reduced to the monopoly of a Church. Bunyan and Defoe are not forgotten writers; nor has the last generation swept away with it the repute of Godwin, Roscoe or Barbauld; and (if we come to more recent times) we see in the charming fictions of Mrs. Gaskell and George Eliot, how the keen eye and delicate sympathy of genius can detect a genuine poetry in the interior life and typical characters of Nonconformist society.

It is very true that the course on which the imaginative literature of our country entered after the Restoration, and under the reaction from the rigour of the Commonwealth, was repulsive to the feeling of the remaining Puritans, and was little likely to stir them to emulation, even when the gradual removal of oppression gave them once more some liberty for liberal pursuits. Apart from the unbridled licence which, under favour of the Court, invaded the stage and tainted the old fancy of the time, the mere influence of French models, which simultaneously became paramount, was enough to alienate the graver English genius which had laboured for the national liberties, and now fell back into the shadow of disappointment and defeat. This tyranny of French tastes, established by the ascendency of Dryden and Pope, hardly relaxed its hold before the time of Cowper and of Goldsmith; and was not completely thrown off till the tales of Scott and the poetry of Wordsworth found their way to other springs of sentiment. During the whole intermediate period, the imagination of our country was virtually lying under a foreign and usurping power; stunned by an authority it could not discard, and too timid and suspicious of its own different inspirations to dare a creative effort. This sudden check to the deeper and intenser part of the national mind, at the moment when else, being now released from practical conflict, it would naturally open to the quiet air of thought and break into the foliage and bloom of Art, is often misconstrued into an evidence of Puritan rudeness and contempt for the intellectual beauty

and grace of life. If, however, we weigh the significance of Milton's career, and remember not only the ample riches of his own learning and accomplishment, but the immense influence which he has exercised upon his compatriots of the same school, we must acknowledge that they could give a passionate admiration to a poet of comprehensive range, who, besides adorning their theology, gave life again to Greek and Roman myths, and reproduced the feeling of Italian Art, and laid the homage of his stately love at the feet of Shakespere. In the earlier Puritans—*e.g.*, Lord Brooke and Sir Harry Vane,—there are many incipient movements of invention towards the creation of a literature congenial to that side of the national feeling. And it is a question which, if too fanciful for solution, is not without interest as a speculation, whether, if the course arrested by the Restoration had continued its development without check, we might not, without the incubus of foreign taste, have sooner found the riches of our characteristic genius, and have grown into stronger men under the training of a firmer and fuller indigenous literature.

After all, however, we may confess without dishonour that Nonconformity has found something else to do than with the muses of history or song. The ideal which it has struggled to work out has been a life rather than a word. Instead of letting the national current run on in undisturbed and therefore slugglish course, it has varied and refreshed the stream with new elements of character and aspiration: especially throwing in a more vigorous insistency on the dignity of conscience and a larger pity for the privations and sufferings of men. Take away the Puritan conflict of the seventeenth century; take away the effects of the Act of Uniformity and St. Bartholomew's Day, down to last session's victory over the exclusive principle; take away the Wesleyan movement a century ago; take away the initiative of Joseph Lancaster in the creation of popular education; the Clarkson crusade against slavery; Elizabeth Fry's compassion for the

prisoner; and what would England now have been? Has the religious struggle nothing to do with the discipline of her conscience and the elevation of her aims? And has the relaxation of that struggle nothing to do with the too easy morals and languid indifference of the present generation? I venture to believe that Dissent, with all its inevitable faults, has mingled a certain Scottish element of energy and gravity with the old type of English character, and made a larger nature from the blending of the two. Nor, until greater justice is done to it, and freer concessions are made to its sense of veracity and its necessity for an unfettered life, is the time come for its functions to cease and its institutions to die.

RELIGION AS AFFECTED BY MODERN MATERIALISM.

PREFACE.

THE following Address, published by desire of my College, was much curtailed in oral delivery. As somewhat more patience may be hoped for in a reader than in a hearer, it now appears in full. The position assumed in it, of resistance to some speculative tendencies of modern physical research, is far from congenial to me: for it seems to place me in the wrong camp. But the exclusive pretension, long set up by Theology, to dominate the whole field of knowledge, seems now to have simply passed over to the material Sciences;—with the effect of inverting, rather than removing, a mischievous intellectual confusion, and shifting the darkness from outward Nature to Morals and Religion. I cannot admit that these are conquered provinces: and to re-affirm their independence, and protest against their absorption in a universal material empire, appears to me a pressing need alike for true philosophy and for the future of human character and society.

LONDON, *Oct.* 12, 1874.

X.—1.

RELIGION AS AFFECTED BY MODERN MATERIALISM.*

THE College which places me here to-day professes to select and qualify suitable men for the Nonconformist Ministry; that is, the headship of societies voluntarily formed for the promotion of the Christian life. In carrying out its work, two rules have been invariably observed: (1) the Special Studies which deal with our sources of religious faith,—whether in the scrutiny of nature or in the interpretation of sacred books,—have been left open to the play of all new lights of thought and knowledge, and have promptly reflected every well-grounded intellectual change; and (2) the General Studies which give the balanced aptitudes of a cultivated mind have been made as extensive and thorough as the years at disposal would allow. In both these rules there is apparent a genuine thirst for a right apprehension of things,—a contempt for the dangers of possible discovery, a persuasion that in the mind most large and luminous the springs of religion have the freshest and the fullest flow; together with the idea that the Preacher, instead of being the organ of a given theology, should himself, by the natural influence of mental superiority, pass to the front and take the lead in a regulated growth of opinion.

* Opening of Session, Manchester New College, London. October, 1874.

There have never been wanting prophets of ill who distrusted this method as rash. So much open air does not suit the closet divine; such liability to change disappoints the fixed idea of the partisan; and the "practical man" does not want his preacher's head made heavy with too much learning, or his faith attenuated in the vacuum of metaphysics. At the present moment these partial distrusts are superseded by a deeper and more comprehensive misgiving, affecting not the method simply, but the aim and function of our Institution. Side by side with the literary pursuits of the scholar, the study of external nature has always had a place of honour in our traditions and our estimates of a manly education; and there is scarcely a special science which has not some brilliant names that range not far from the lines of our history; and from the favourite shelf of all our libraries, the Principia of Newton, the Essays of Franklin, the Papers of Priestley and Dalton, the "Principles" of Lyell, the Biological Treatises of Southwood Smith and Carpenter, and the records of Botanical research by Sir James Smith and the Hookers, look down upon us with something of a personal interest. The successive enlargements given by these skilled interpreters to our earlier picture of the world,—the widening Space, the deepening vistas of Time, the new groups of chemical elements and the precision of their combinations, the detected marvels of physiological structure, and the rapid filling-in of missing links in the chain of organic life, —have been eagerly welcomed as adding a glory to the realities around, and, by the erection of fresh shrines and cloisters, turning the simple temple in which we once stood into a clustered magnificence. Thus it was, so long as discoveries came upon us one by one; nor did any Biblical chronology or Apocalypse interfere with their proper evidence for an hour. But *now*,—must we not confess it?—certain shadows of anxiety seem to steal forth and mingle with the advancing light of natural knowledge, and temper it to a less genial warmth. It comes on, no longer in the

simple form of pulse after pulse of positive and limited discovery, but with the ambitious sweep of a universal theory, in which facts given by observation, laws gathered by induction, and conceptions furnished by the mind itself, are all wrought up together as if of homogeneous validity. A report is thus framed of the Genesis of things, made up indeed of many true chapters of science, but systematized by the terms and assumptions of a questionable, if not an untenable philosophy. To the inexpert reader this report seems to be all of one piece; and he is disturbed to find an account apparently complete of the "Whence and the Whither" of all things without recourse to aught that is Divine; to see the refinements of organism and exactitudes of adaptation disenchanted of their wonder; to watch the beauty of the flower fade into a necessity; to learn that Man was never *intended* for his place upon this scene, and has no commission to fulfil, but is simply flung hither by the competitive passions of the most gifted brutes; and to be assured that the élite beings that tenant the earth tread each upon an infinite series of failures, and survive as trophies of immeasurable misery and death. Thus an apprehension has become widely spread, that Natural History and Science are destined to give the *coup de grâce* to all theology, and discharge the religious phenomena from human life; that churches and their symbols must disappear like the witches' chamber and the astrologists' tower; and that, as everything above our nature is dark and void, those who affect to lift it lead it nowhither, and must take themselves away as "blind leaders of the blind." Whether this apprehension is well founded or not is a very grave question for society in many relations; emphatically urgent for those who educate men as spiritual guides to others, and who can invest them with no directing power except the native force of a mind at one with the truth of things and a heart of quickened sympathies. Hitherto, they have been trained under the assumptions that the Universe which includes us and folds us round is

the Life-dwelling of an Eternal Mind; that the World of our abode is the scene of a Moral Government incipient but not yet complete; and that the upper zones of Human Affection, above the clouds of self and passion, take us into the sphere of a Divine Communion. Into this over-arching scene it is that growing thought and enthusiasm have expanded to catch their light and fire. And if "the new faith" is to carry in it the contradictories of these positions,—if it leaves us to make what we can of a simply molecular universe, and a pessimist world, and an unappeasable battle of life,—it will require another sort of Apostolate, and would make such a difference in the studies which it is reasonable to pursue, that it might be wisest for us to disband, and let the new Future preach its own gospel, and devise, if it can, the means of making the tidings "*glad*." Better at once to own our occupation gone than to linger on sentimental sufferance, and accept the indulgent assurance that, though there is no longer any *truth* in religion, there is some nice feeling in it; and that while, for all we have to teach, we might shut up to-morrow, we may harmlessly keep open still, as a nursery of "*Emotion*."* I trust that, when "emotion" proves empty, we shall stamp it out, and get rid of it.

Though, however, no partnership between the physicist and the theologian can be formed on these terms, of assigning the intellect to the one and the feelings to the other, may it not be that, in the flurry of exultation and of panic, they misconstrue their real position? and that their relations, when calmly surveyed, may not be in such a state of tension as each is ready to believe? Looking on their respective contentions from the external position of logical observation, and without presuming to call in question the received inductions of the naturalist, I believe that both parties mistake the bearing of those inductions upon religion; and that, although this bearing is in some

* See Professor Tyndall's Address before the British Association; with Additions, p. 61.

aspects serious, it is neither of the quality nor of the magnitude frequently ascribed to it. I venture to affirm that the essence of religion, summed up in the three assumptions already enumerated, is independent of any possible results of the natural sciences, and stands fast through the various readings of the genesis of things.

The unpractised mind of simple times goes out, it is true, upon everything *en masse*, and indeterminately feels and thinks about itself and the field of its existence, the inner and the outer, the transient and the permanent, the visible and the invisible: its knowledge and its worship, the pictures of its fancy and the intuitions of its faith, are as yet a single tissue, of which every broken thread rends and deforms the whole. Hence the oldest sacred traditions run into stories of world-building; and the earliest attempts at a systematic interpretation of nature, in which physical ideas were clothed in mythical garb, are regarded by Aristotle as "*theological*." It must be admitted that our own age has not yet emerged from this confusion. And in so far as Church belief is still committed to a given cosmogony and natural history of Man, it lies open to scientific refutation, and has already received from it many a wound under which it visibly pines away. It is needless to say that the *new* "book of Genesis," which resorts to Lucretius for its "first beginnings," to protoplasm for its fifth day, to "natural selection" for its Adam and Eve, and to evolution for all the rest, contradicts the *old* book at every point; and inasmuch as it dissipates the dream of Paradise, and removes the tragedy of the Fall, cancels at once the need and the scheme of Redemption, and so leaves the historical churches of Europe crumbling away from their very foundations. If any one would know how utterly unproducible in modern daylight is the theology of the symbolical books, how absolutely alien from the real springs of our life, let him follow for a few hours the newest movement of ecclesiastical reform, and listen to the reported conferences at Bonn on the remedies

for a divided Christendom. Scarcely could the personal re-appearance of Athanasius or Cyril on the floor of the council-hall be more startling, or the cries of anathema from the voices of the ancient dead have a more wondrous sound, than the reproduction, as hopes of the future, by men of Munich, of Chester, of Pittsburg, and of the Eastern Church, of formulas without meaning for the present, the eager discussion of subtle varieties of falsehood, and the anxious masking of their differences by opaque phrases under which everybody manages to look. Such signs of strange intellectual anachronism excuse the aversion with which many a thoughtful man, with a heart still full of reverence, turns away from all religious association, and lives without a church. It has been the infatuation of ecclesiastics to miss the inner divine spirit that breathes through the sources of their faith, and to seize, as the materials of their system, the perishable conceptions and unverified predictions of more fervent but darker times; so that, in the structure they have raised, all that is most questionable in the legacy of the past,—obsolete Physics, mythical History, Messianic Mythology, Apocalyptic prognostications,—have been built into the very walls, if not made the corner-stone, and now by their inevitable decay threaten the whole with ruin. Why indeed should I charge this infatuation on councils and divines alone? It is not professional but human; it is a delusion which affects us all. We are for ever shaping our representations of invisible things, in comparison with other men's notions, into forms of definite opinion, and throwing them to the front, as if they were the photographic equivalent of our real faith. Yet somehow the essence of our religion never finds its way into these frames of theory: as we put them together it slips away, and, if we turn to pursue it, still retreats behind; ever ready to work with the will, to unbind and sweeten the affections, and bathe the life with reverence; but refusing to be seen, or to pass from a divine hue of thinking into a human pattern of

thought. The effects of this infatuation in the founders of our civilization are disastrous on both sides,—not only to the Churches whose system is undermined, but to the Spirit of the Science which undermines it. It turns out that, with the sun and moon and stars, and in and on the earth both before and after the appearance of our race, quite other things have happened than those which the consecrated cosmogony recites: especially Man, instead of falling from a higher state, has risen from a lower, and inherits, instead of a uniform corruption, a law of perpetual improvement; so that the real process has the effect, not only of an enormous magnifier, but of an inverting mirror, on the theological picture. Yet, notwithstanding the deplorable appearance to which that picture is thus reduced, it is exhibited afresh every week to millions still taught to regard it as Divine. This is the mischief on the Theologic side. On the other hand, Science, in executing this merited punishment, has borrowed from its opponents one of their worst errors, in identifying the anomalous or lawless with the divine, and assuming that whatever falls within the province of nature drops thereby out of relation to God. As the old story of Creation called in the Supreme Power only by way of supernatural paroxysm, to gain some fresh start beyond the resources of the natural order, so the new inquirers, on getting rid of these crises, fancy that the Agent who had been invoked for them is gone, and proclaim at once that Matter without Thought is competent to all. In thus confounding the idea of the Divine Mind with that of *miracle-worker*, they do but go over to the theological camp, and snatch thence its oldest and bluntest weapon, which in modern conflict can only burden the hand that wields it. How runs the history of their alleged negative discovery? The Naturalist was told in his youth that at certain intervals,—at the joints, for instance, between successive species of organisms,—acts of sudden creation summoned fresh groups of creatures out of nothing. These epochs he attacks with riper knowledge; he finds a series

of intermediary forms, and fragmentary lines of suggestion for others; and when the affinities are fairly complete, and the chasm in the order of production is filled up, he turns upon us and says, "See, there is no break in the chain of origination, however far back you trace it; we no more want a Divine Agent *there* and *then* than *here* and *now*." Be it so; but it is precisely here and now that He is needed, to be the fountain of orderly power, and to render the tissue of Laws intelligible by his presence: his witness is found not only in the gaps, but in the continuity of being, —not in the suspense, but in the everlasting flow of change; for, the universe as known, being throughout a system of *Thought-relations*, can subsist only in an eternal Mind that thinks it.

The whole history of the Genesis of things Religion must unconditionally surrender to the Sciences. Not indeed that it is without share in the great question of *Causality*: but its concern with it is totally different from theirs; for it asks only about the "*Whence*" of all phenomena, while they concentrate their scrutiny upon the "*How*": by which I mean that their end is accomplished as soon as it has been found in what groups phenomena regularly cluster, and on what threads of succession they are strung, and into what classification their resemblances throw them. These are matters of fact, directly or circuitously ascertainable by perception, and remaining the same, *be their originating power what it may*. On *that* ulterior question the Sciences have nothing to say. And, on the other hand, when Religion here takes up her word and insists that the phenomena thus reduced to system are the product of *Mind*, she in no way prejudges the *modus operandi*, but is ready to accept whatever affinities of aspect, whatever adjustments of order, the skill of observers may reveal. On *these* investigations she has nothing to say. If indeed you could ever show that the method of the universe is one along which *no Mind could move*,—that it is absolutely incoherent and unideal,—you would destroy the possibility

of Religion as a doctrine of Causality; only, however, by simultaneously discovering the impossibility of Science,—which wholly consists in organizing the phenomena of the world into an intellectual scheme reflecting the structure of its archetype. That those who labour to render the universe *intelligible* should call in question its *relation to intelligence*, is one of those curious inconsistencies to which the ablest specialists are often the most liable when meditating in foreign fields. If it takes *mind* to construe the world, how can the negation of mind suffice to constitute it?

It is not in the history of Superstition alone that the human mind may be found struggling in the grasp of some mere Nightmare of its own creation: a philosophical hypothesis may sit upon the breast with a weight not less oppressive and not more real; till a friendly touch or a dawning light breaks the spell, and reveals the quiet morning and the bed of rest. Is there, for instance, no logical illusion in the Materialist doctrine which in our time is proclaimed with so much pomp and resisted with so much passion? "Matter is all I want," says the Physicist: "give me its atoms alone, and I will explain the universe." "Good: take as many of them as you please: see, they have all that is requisite to Body, being homogeneous extended solids." "That is not enough," he replies; "it might do for Democritus and the mathematicians, but I must have somewhat more; the atoms must be not only in motion and of various shapes, but also of as many kinds as there may be chemical elements; for how could I ever get water, if I had only hydrogen molecules to work with?" "So be it," we shall say; "only this is a considerable enlargement of your specified datum,—in fact, a conversion of it into several; yet, even at the cost of its monism, your scheme seems hardly to gain its end; for by what manipulation of your resources will you, for example, educe *consciousness?* No organism can ever show you more than matter moved; and, as Dubois-Reymond observes, there

is an impassable chasm "between definite movements of definite cerebral atoms and the primary facts which I can neither define nor deny—*I feel pain or pleasure, I taste a sweetness, smell a rose-scent, hear an organ tone, see red,* together with the no less immediate assurance they give, *therefore I exist*": "it remains," he adds, "entirely and for ever inconceivable that it should signify a jot to a number of carbon and hydrogen and nitrogen and oxygen and other atoms how they lie and move"; "in no way can one see how from their concurrence consciousness can arise." * "What say you to this problem"? "It does not daunt me at all," he declares: "of course you understand that my atoms have all along been affected by gravitation and polarity; and now I have only to insist, with Fechner,† on a difference among molecules; there are the *inorganic,* which can change only their *place,* like the particles in an undulation; and there are the *organic,* which can change their *order,* as in a globule that turns itself inside out. With an adequate number of these, our problem will be manageable." "Likely enough," we may say, "seeing how careful you are to provide for all emergencies; and if any hitch should occur at the next step, where you will have to pass from mere sentiency to Thought and Will, you can again look in upon your atoms, and fling among them a handful of Leibnitz's monads, to serve as souls in little, and be ready, in a latent form, with that *Vorstellungsfähigkeit* which our picturesque interpreters of nature so much prize. But surely you must observe how this "Matter" of yours alters its style with every change of service: starting as a beggar, with scarce a rag of "property" to cover its bones,

* "Ueber die Grenzen des Naturerkennens," p. 29. Compare p. 20. "I will now prove, as I believe in a very cogent way, not only that, in the present state of our knowledge, Consciousness cannot be explained by its material conditions,—which perhaps every one allows, —but that from the very nature of things it never will admit of explanation by these conditions."

† "Einige Ideen zur Schöpfungs-und Entwickelungsgeschichte der Organismen, §§ i. ii."

it turns up as a Prince, when large undertakings are wanted, loaded with investments, and within an inch of a plenipotentiary. In short, you give it precisely what you require to take from it; and when your definition has made it "pregnant with all the future," there is no wonder if from it all the future might be born.

"We must radically change our notions of "Matter," says Professor Tyndall; and then, he ventures to believe, it will answer all demands, carrying "the promise and potency of all terrestrial life." * If the measure of the required "change in our notions" had been specified, the proposition would have had a real meaning, and been susceptible of a test. Without this precision, it only tells us, "Charge the word potentially with your quæsita, and I will promise to elicit them explicitly." It is easy travelling through the stages of such an hypothesis; you deposit at your bank a round sum ere you start; and drawing on it piecemeal at every pause, complete your grand tour without a debt. Words, however, ere they can hold such richness of prerogative, will be found to have emerged from their physical meaning, and to be truly *θεοφόρα ὀνόματα*,—terms that bear God in them, and thus dissolve the very theory which they represent. Such extremely clever Matter,—matter that is up to everything, even to writing Hamlet, and finding out its own evolution, and substituting a molecular plébiscite for a divine monarchy of the world, may fairly be regarded as a little too modest in its disclaimer of the attributes of Mind.

Nor is the fallacy escaped by splitting our datum into two, and instead of crowding all requisites into Matter, leaving it on its own slender footing, and assuming along with it *Force* as a distinct entity. The two postulates will perform their promise, just like the one, on condition that you secrete within them in the germ all that you are to

* Address before the British Association; with Additions, pp. 54, 55. Compare the statement, by Dubois-Reymond, of the opposite opinion, quoted in the note on the last page.

develop from them as their fruit; and in this case the word "*Force*" is the magical seed-vessel which is to surprise us with the affluence of its contents. The surprise is due to one or two nimble-witted substitutions, of which a conjuror might be proud, whereby unequals are shown to be equals, and out of an acorn you hatch a chicken. First the noun *Force* is sent into the plural (which of course is only itself in another form), and so we get provided with several of them. Next, as there is now a class, the members must be distinguishable; and, as they are all of them activities, they will be known one from another by the sort of work they do: one will be a mechanician,—another a chemist,—a third will be a swift runner along the tracks of life,—a fourth will find out all the rest,—will do our reasoning about them, and get up all our examinations for us. The last of these, every one must own,—at least every one who has graduated,—is much more dignified than the others; and all through we rise, at every step, from ruder to more refined accomplishment. With things thus settled, we seem to have found Plato's ideal State, in which every order minds its own business, and no element presumes to cross the line and become something else. Not so, however; for, after thus differencing the forces and keeping them under separate covers, the next step is to unify them, and show them all as the homogeneous contents of a single receptacle. The forces, we are assured, are interchangeable and relieve each other; when one has carried its message, it hands the torch to another, and the light is never quenched or the race arrested, but runs an eternal round. But why then, you will say, divide them first, only to unite them afterwards? Follow our logical wonder-worker one move further, and you will see. He has now, we may say, his four vessels standing on the table; the contents of the whole are to be whisked into one; having them all, he has more ways than one of working out their equivalence; and it remains at his option, *which* he shall lift to let the mouse run out. For some reason, best known

to himself, he never thinks of choosing the last; indeed it is pretty much to avoid this, and obtain other receptacles *empty of thought*, that he broke down the original unity. If he be a circumspect physiologist, he will probably prefer the third, and exhibit the universal principle as in some sense *living;* if he be a daring physicist, he will lay hold of the first, and pronounce *mechanical* dynamics good enough for the cosmos.

Am I asked to indicate the precise seat of fallacy in the hypothesis which I have ventured to criticize? The alleged division of forces, considered as something over and above the phenomena ascribed to them, is absolutely without ground; each of them, as apart from any other, has a purely ideal existence, without the slightest claim to objective reality. Science, dividing its labours, has to break down phenomena into sets according to their resemblances and the affinities of their conditions; it disposes them thus into natural provinces, the laws of which, when ascertained, give us the rules by which the phenomena assort themselves or successively arise,—but nothing more. But whatever field we survey, we carry into it the belief inherent in the constitution of the intellect itself, of a Causal Power as the source of every change: we believe it for each, we believe it for all: it repeats itself identically with every instance; and when a multitude of instances are tied up together in virtue of their similarity and made into a class, this constantly recurring reference, this identity of relation to a power behind, is marked by giving that power a singular name: as the phenomena of weight are labelled with the title *Gravitation*, expressing unity in their causal relation. Were we closeted with this group of facts alone, this unity would live in our minds without a rival, and we should have no numerical distinction in our account of force. But, meanwhile, other observers have been going through a like experience in some separate field; have gleaned and bound into a sheaf its scattered mass of homogeneous growths, and denoted them by another name—say, *Electricity*,—carrying

in it the same haunting reference to a source for them all. Now why is this *a new* name? Is it that we have found a new *power?* Have we carried our observation *behind the phenomena*, so as, in either instance, to find any power at all? Are the two cases differenced by anything else than the dissimilarity of their phenomena? Run over these distinctions, and, when you have exhausted them, is there anything left by which you can compare and set apart from each other the respective producing forces? All these questions must be answered in the negative; the differentiations lie only in the effects; the causal power is not *observed*, but *thought;* and that thought is the same, not only from instance to instance, but from field to field; and by this sameness it cancels plurality from Force, and reduces the story of their transmigration into a scientific mythology. The distinctive names therefore mark only differences in the *sets of phenomena;* they are simply instruments of classification for noticeable changes in nature, and carry no partitions into the mysterious depths behind the scenes. The dynamic catalogue being thus left empty and cut down to a single term, do we talk nonsense when we attach qualifying epithets to the word *Force*, and speak of '*electric force*,' of '*nerve force*,' of '*polar force*,' &c.? Not so; provided we mean by those phrases, simply, *Force, quantum sufficit*, now for *one set of phenomena, now for another*, without implication of other difference than that of the seat and conditions and aspect of the manifestations. But the moment we step across this restriction, we are in the land of myths.

Power then is one and undivided. As external causality, it is not an *object of knowledge* but an *element given in the relations of a knowledge, a condition of our thinking of phenomena at all.* Were this all, our necessary belief in it would be unattended by any *representation* of it; it would remain an intellectual notion (Begriff), and we could no more bring it before the mind under any definite type than we can the meaning of such words as "substance" and

"possibility." In one field, however, and no more, it falls into coincidence with our experience; for we ourselves put forth power in the exercise of Will and are personally conscious of Causality; and this sample of *immediate* knowledge because *self*-knowledge supplies us with the means of *representing* to ourselves what else we should have to *think* without a type. Here accordingly we reach, I venture to affirm, what we really mean, and what alone saves us from the mere empty form of meaning, whenever we assent to the axiom of causality. It is very true that the exercise of Will, having more or less of complication, itself admits of analysis; *intention* may play a larger or smaller part, may leave less or more for the share of automatic or impulsive activity; and by letting the former withdraw into the background of our conception, we may come to think of *causation apart from purpose*,—which, I suppose, is the *idea of Force*. But this is a bare fiction of abstraction, shamming an integral reality;—an old soldier pensioned off from actual duty, but allowed to wear his uniform and look like what he was. Since we have to assume causality for all things, and the only causality we know is that of living mind, that type has no legitimate competitor. Even if it had, its sole adequacy would leave it in possession of the field. For among the products to be accounted for is the whole class and heirarchy of *minds;* and unless there is to be more in the effect than in the cause, nothing less than Mind is competent to realize a scheme of being whose ranks ascend so high. As for the plea,—which has unhappily passed into a commonplace,—that, even if it be so, that transcendent object is beyond all cognizance,—I will only say that this doctrine of Nescience stands in exactly the same relation to causal power, whether you construe it as Material Force or as Divine Agency. Neither can be *observed;* one or the other must be *assumed*. If you admit to the category of knowledge only what we learn by observation, particular or generalized, then is Force unknown; if you extend the word to what is imported by

the intellect itself into our cognitive acts, to make them such, then is God known.

This comment on current hypotheses refers to them only so far as they overstep the limits of Science, and aspire to the seat of judgment on ulterior questions of Philosophy. So long as they simply descend upon this or that realm of nature, and try their strength there in simplifying its laws or rendering them deducible,—or, passing from province to province, labour to formulate equations available for several or for all,—they must be respectfully left to pursue their work; and whenever their authors present their demonstrated "system of the world," all reasonable men will learn it from them, whatever it may be, as scholars from a master. In the investigation of the genetic order of things, Theology is an intruder, and must stand aside. Religion first reaches its true ground, when leaving the problem of what *has happened*, it takes its stand on what *for ever is*.* I do not

* This statement has been pronounced by a friendly critic (*Spectator*, October 17, p. 1293) "not only questionable, but gravely misleading;" as implying "that if history and science showed us constant degradation instead of evolution of higher forms, and filled us with anticipations from which reasonable hope,—hope, that is, measured by experience,—was utterly excluded, the religion of the Soul would just as certainly assert the supremacy of righteousness and the love of God, as she does with the united voices of revelation and experience to help her out."

If I had said that Religion has *no interest* in the history of nature and the world, this criticism would have been just. But I cannot see how it applies to the positions which the text aims to make good: viz., that Religion has no *locus standi* in investigations about the order of phenomena in the past, but must make what it can of that order as determined by scientific evidence: and that Religion has a *locus standi*, where Science has not, in the quest and cognition of the Cause that is behind all phenomena. To reach that Cause, there is no need to go into the past, as though, being missed here, He could be found there. But when once He has been discerned through the proper organs of divine apprehension, the whole life of humanity is recognized as the scene of His agency, and the past, no less than the present, has to be embraced in the religious interpretation of the world, and becomes an object of sacred interest. Though Religion, in taking its stand on

say that it is indifferent to us how antecedent ages have been filled, and have brought up the march with which we fall into step to-day; for we are beings of large perspective, concentrating in us many lines of distance and images that lie between the eye and the horizon; and what we see at hand borrows a portion of its aspect from relation to remoter zones behind. But still, if the light were all turned off from the Past, and on facing it we looked only into the Night, the reality for us is not *there*, but *here*, where it is Day. However the present may have come about, I find myself in it: in whatever way my faculties may have been determined, faculties they are, and they give me insight into my duty and outlook on my position: however the world, of Nature and of Society, may have grown to what it is, its scene contains me, its relations twine around me, its physiognomy appeals to me with a meaning from behind itself. If these data do not suffice to show me my kinship with what is above, below, around me, and find my moral and spiritual place, I shall not be greatly helped by discovering how many ages my constitution has been upon the stocks, and its antecedents been upon the way. The beings that touch me with their look and draw me out of myself, the duties that press upon my heart and hand, are on the spot, speaking to me while the clock ticks; and to love them aright, to serve them faithfully, and construct with them a true harmony of life, is the same task, whether I bear within me the inheritance of a million years, or, with all my surroundings, issued this morning from the dark.

Remaining then at home, and consulting the nature which we have and which we see, we find that, far from being self-inclosed, or related only to its visible dependences, it turns a face, on more than one side, right towards the Infinite, and, often to the disregard of nearer things, moves hither or thither as if shrinking from a shadow

what for ever is, *first reaches* its true ground, it does not follow that it must always remain there.

advancing thence, or drawn by a light that wins it forward. We are constantly,—even the most practical of us,—seeing what is invisible and hearing what is inaudible, and permitting them to send us on our way. Not left, like the mere animal, to be the passive resultant of forces without and instincts within, but invested with an alternative power, we are conscious partners in the architecture of our own character, and know ourselves to be the bearers of a *trust;* and this fiduciary life takes us at once across the boundary which separates nature from what transcends it. Seducing appetites and turbulent passions and ignoble ease never gain our undivided ear; while we bend to them, there are pleading voices which distract us, and which, if they do not not save us, follow us with an expostulating shame. Nor, if ever we wake up and kindle at the appeal of misery and the cry of wrong, or with the spontaneous fire of disinterested affection or devotion to the true and good, can we construe them into anything less than a Divine claim upon us: we know their right over us at a glance; we feel on us their look of Authority in reply; if, to our careless fancy, we were ever our own, we can be so no more. Once stirred by the higher springs of character, and possessed by the yearning for the perfect mind, we are aware that to live out of these is our supreme obligation, and that for us nothing short of this is holy. To have *seen* the vision of the best and possible and *not* to pursue it, is to mar the true idea of our nature, and to fall from its heaven as a rebel and an outcast. This inner life of Conscience and ideal aspiration supplies the elements and sphere of Religion; and the discovery of Duty is as distinctly relative to an Objective Righteousness as the perception of Form to an external Space: it is a bondage, with superficial reluctance but with deeper consent, to an invisible Highest; and both moral Fear and moral Love stand before the face of an Authority which is the eternal Reality of the holy, just, and true. On the first view, you might expect that the stronger the enthusiasm for goodness, and the surer the

recoil from ill, so much the fitter would the mind be to stand alone in its self-adequacy ; yet it is precisely at such elevation that it most trusts in a Supreme Perfection to which it only faintly responds, and leans for support on that everlasting stay. The life of aspiration, attempting to nurse itself, soon pines and dies ; it must breathe a diviner air and take its thirst to unwasting springs ; and wherever it settles into a quiet tension of the will and an upturned look of the affections, it is sustained by habitual access to the Fountain of sanctity, and by the consciousness of an Infinite sympathy. Are not both the need and the existence of this objective sustaining power acknowledged by Mr. Matthew Arnold himself, when he insists on that strange entity, "That, not ourselves, *which makes for righteousness*" ? By an abstraction, however, such a function cannot be discharged ; nothing ever "makes for righteousness" but One who *is* righteous. To support and raise the less, there must be a greater ; and that which does not think and will and love, whatever the drift of its blind power, may indeed be larger, but is not greater, than the sinning soul that longs for purity.

Now so long as the devotee of Goodness is possessed by a faith, not only in his own aspirations, but in an Infinite Mind which fosters and secures them as counterparts of the highest reality, it is of little moment ethically what theory he adopts of their mode of origin within him. Whether he takes them as intuitive data of his Understanding, or, with Hartley, as a transfiguration of sensible interests into a disinterested glory, or, with Darwin and Spencer, as the latest refinement of animal instinct and discipline after percolating through uncounted generations, —that which he has reached,—be it first or last,—is at all events *the truth of things*, the primordial and everlasting certainty, in comparison with which all prior stages of training, if such there were, give but dim gropings and transient illusions. In Hartley himself, accordingly, a doctrine essentially materialistic and carrying in it the

whole principle of Evolution, so far as it could be epitomized in the individual's life, easily blended with moral fervour and even a mystic piety; and, in Priestley, with a noble heroism of veracity and an unswerving confidence in the perfect government of the universe. But what if the process of atomic development be taken as the *Substitute for God*, not as His *method?* if you withdraw from the beginning all *Idea* of what is to come out at the end,—all Model or Archetype to control and direct the procedure, and restrain the *possible* from running off indefinitely into the false and wrong? Do you suppose that the ethical results can be still the same? The inevitable difference, I think, few considerate persons will deny; and without attempt to measure its amount, its chief feature may be readily defined.

It was often said by both James and John Stuart Mill, that you do not alter, much less destroy, a feeling or sentiment by giving its history; from whatever unexpected sources its constituents may be gathered, when once their confluence is complete the current they form runs on the same, whether you know them or not. How true this may be is exemplified by the younger Mill himself: who, while resolving the moral sentiments into simple pleasure and pain, and moral obligation into a balance of happiness, yet nobly protested that he would rather plunge into eternal anguish than falsely bend before an unrighteous power. If so it be, then one in whom benevolence, honour, purity, had reached their greatest refinement and most decisive clearness would suffer no change of moral consciousness, on becoming convinced that it is a "poetic thrill" of his "ganglia"* induced by the long breaking-in through which his progenitors have passed, in conformity with the system of organic modification that has deprived him of his fur and his tail. In spite of the apparent incongruity, let us grant that his higher affections will speak to him exactly as before and make their claims felt by the same tones of

* Professor Tyndall's Address, p. 49.

sacred authority, so that they continue to subdue him in reverence or lift him as with inspiration. The surrender to them of heart and will under these conditions, the vow to abide by them and live in them, may still deserve acknowledgment as *Religion;* but, inasmuch as they have shrunk into mere unaccredited subjective susceptibilities, they have lost all support from Omniscient approval, and all presumable accordance with the reality of things. For what *are* these moral intensities of his nature, seen under his new lights? Whence is their message? With what right do they deliver it to him in that imperative voice? and, if it be slighted, prostrate him with unspeakable compunction? Are they an influx of Righteousness and Love from the life of the universe. Do they report the insight of beings more august and pure? No; they are capitalized "experiences of utility" and social coercion, the record of ancestral fears and satisfactions stored in his brain, and re-appearing with divine pretensions, only because their animal origin is forgotten; or, under another aspect, they are the newest advantage won by gregarious creatures in "the struggle for existence." From such an origin it is impossible to extract credentials for any elevated claim; so that although low beginnings may lead, in the natural order, to what is better than themselves,—as a Julia may be the mother of an Agrippina,—yet in such case the superiority lies in new endowment, which is *not* contained in the inheritance. For such new endowment as we gain in the ascent from interest to conscience the theory of transmission cannot provide; if the coarse and turbid springs of barbarous life, filtered through innumerable organisms, flow limpid and sparkling at last, the element is still the same, though the sediment is left behind; and as it would need a diviner power to turn the water into wine, so Prudence run however fine, social Conformity however swift and spontaneous, can never convert themselves into Obligation. Hence arises, I think, an inevitable contradiction between the scientific hypothesis and the personal characteristics of a high-souled

disciple of the modern negative doctrine. For his supreme affections no adequate Object and no corresponding Source is offered in the universe: if they look back for their cradle, they see through the forest the cabin of the savage or the lair of the brute; if they look forth for their justifying Reality and end, they fling vain arms aloft and embrace a vacancy. They cannot defend, yet cannot relinquish, their own enthusiasm: they bear him forward upon heroic lines that sweep wide of his own theory; and, transcending their own reputed origin and environment, they float upon vapours and are empty, self-poised by their own heat. One or two instances will illustrate the way in which what is best in our humanity is left, in the current doctrine, unsupported by the real constitution of the world.

Compassion,—the instinctive response to the spectacle of misery,—has a two-fold expressiveness: it is in us a protesting vote against the sufferings we see; and a sign of faith that they are not ultimate but remediable. Its singularity is, to be not one of these alone, but both. Were it a simple repugnance, it would drive us from its object; but it is an *aversion which attracts:* it snatches us with a bound to the very thing we hate, and not with hostile rush, but with softened tread and gentle words and uplifting hand. And what is the secret of this transfiguration of horror into love? It could never be but for the implicit assurance that for these wounds there is healing possible, if the nursing care does not delay. Should we not say then, if we trusted its own word about itself, that this principle, so deep and intense in our unfolded nature, is an evident provision for a world of *hopeful sorrow?* It is distinctly relative to pain, and would be out of place in a scene laid out for happiness alone; yet treats that pain as transient, and on passing into the cloud already sees the opening through. It enters the infirmary of human ills with the tender and cheerful trust of the young sister of mercy, who binds herself to the perpetual presence of human maladies that she may be for ever giving them their dis-

charge. Compassion institutes a strange order of servitude: it sets the strong to obey the weak, the man and woman to wait upon the child, and youth and beauty to kneel and bend before decrepitude and deformity. How then do the drift and faith of this instinct agree with the method of the outer world as now interpreted? Do they copy it exactly, and find encouragement from the great example? On the contrary, Nature, it is customary to say, is *pitiless*, and, while ever moving on, makes no step but by crushing a thousand-fold more sentient life than she ultimately sets up, and sets up none that does not devour what is already there. The battle of existence rages through all time and in every field; and its rule is to give no quarter,—to despatch the maimed, to overtake the halt, to trip up the blind, and drive the fugitive host over the precipice into the sea. Nature is fond of the mighty, and kicks the feeble; and, while for ever multiplying wretchedness, has no patience with it when it looks up and moans. And so all-pervading is this rule, that evil, we are told, cannot really be put down, but only masked and diverted; if you suppress it here, it will break out there; the fire of anguish still rolls below and has alternate vents; when you stop up Ætna, it will blot out Sodom and Gomorrha, and bury the cities of the plain. Who can deny that such teachings as these set the outer universe and our inner nature at its best at hopeless variance with one another? Do they not depress the moral power to which we owe the most humanizing features of our civilization? We have not to go far for a practical answer. Within a few weeks the question has been raised whether the recent flow of commiseration towards the famine-stricken districts of India does not offend against the Law of Nature for reducing a superfluous population; and whether there were not advantages in the old method of taking no notice of these things, and letting Death pass freely over his threshing-floor and bury the human chaff quietly out of the way. Moral enthusiasm makes many a mischievous mistake in its haste and blind-

ness, and greatly needs the guidance of wiser thought; but this tone of moral scepticism, which disparages the very springs of generous labour, and treats them as follies laughed at by the cynicism of Nature, is a thousand-fold more desolating. For it carries poison to the very roots of good. It is as the bursting out of salt-springs in the valley of fruits; it soaks through the prolific soil of all the virtues, and turns the promise of Eden into a Dead Sea shore.

Beyond the range of the merely compassionate impulse, *Self-forgetfulness* in love for others has a foremost place in our ideal of character, and our deep homage as representing the true end of our humanity. We exact it from ourselves, and the poor answer we make to the demand costs us many a sigh; and till we can break the bonds that hold us to our own centre, and lose our self-care in constant sacrifice, a shadow of silent reproach lies upon our heart. Who is so faultless, or so obtuse, as to be ignorant what shame there is, not only in snatched advantages and ease retained to others' loss, but in ungentle words, in wronging judgment within our private thoughts alone; nay, in simple blindness to what is passing in another's mind? Who does not upbraid himself for his slowness in those sympathies which are as a multiplying mirror to the joys of life, reflecting them in endless play? And the grace so imperfect in ourselves wins our instant veneration when realized in others. The historical admirations of men are often, indeed, drawn to a very different type of character: for Genius and Will have their magnificence as well as Goodness its beauty: but before the eye of a purified reverence, neither the giants of force nor the recluses of saintly austerity stand on so high a pedestal as the devoted benefactors of mankind. The heroes of honour are great; but the heroes of service are greater; nor does any appeal speak more home to us than a true story of life risked, of ambitions dropped, of repose surrendered, of temper moulded, of all things serenely endured,—perhaps un-

noticed and in exile,—at some call of sweet or high affection. Is then this religion of Self-sacrifice the counterpart of the behaviour of the objective world? Is the same principle to be found dominating on that great scale? Far from it. *There*, we are informed, the only rule is *self-assertion:* the all-determining Law is relentless competition for superior advantage; the condition of obeying which is, that you are to forego nothing, and never to miss an opportunity of pushing a rival over, and seizing the prey before he is on his feet again. We look without, and see the irresistible fact of selfish scramble: we look within, and find the irresistible faith of unselfish abnegation. So here, again, Morals are unnatural, and Nature is unmoral; and if, beyond Nature, there is nothing supreme in both relations to determine the subordination and resolve the contradiction, he who would be loyal to the higher call must be so without ground of trust; if he will not betray his secret ideal, he must follow it unverified, as a mystic enchantment of his own mind.

Once more; the *Sense of Duty* enforces the suggestions of these and other affections by an authority which we recognize as at once within us and over us, and making them more than *impulses*, more than *ideals*, and establishing them in *binding* relations with our Will. The rudest self-knowledge must own that the consciousness of *Moral Obligation* is an experience *sui generis*, separated by deep distinctions from *outward necessity* on the one hand and *inward desire* upon the other; and the only psychology which can bridge over these distinctions is that which escapes with its analysis into prehistoric ages, and finds it easy to grow vision out of touch, and read back all differentiation into sameness. No one would carry off the problem into that darkness who could deal with it in the present daylight: so, we may take it as confessed, that *to us* the suasion of Right speaks with a voice which no charming of pleasure and no chorus of opinion can ever learn to mimic. To disregard *them* is a simple matter of

courage; we defy them, and are free: but if from *it* we turn away, we hear pursuing feet behind: and should we stop our ears, we feel upon us the grasp of an awful hand. Moral good would, in our apprehension, cease to be what it is, were it constituted by any natural good, or related to it otherwise than as its superior. It is not a *personal* end, —one among the many satisfactions assigned to the separate activities of our constitution: else, it would be at our disposal, and we might forego it. Others are our partners in it: for it sets up *Rights* as counterparts to *Duties*, and widens by its reciprocity into a common element of Humanity. Is *that* then its native home? Have men created it, as an expression of their general wish,—a concentrated code of civic police? We cannot rest in this: for no aggregate of wills, no public meeting of mankind, though it got together all generations and all contemporary tribes, could by vote make perfidy a virtue and turn pity into a crime. Moral Right is thus no *local* essence; but by its centrifugal force, relatively to our abode, slips off the earth and assumes an absolute universality as the law of all free agency. That it should present itself to us in this transcendent aspect is intelligible enough, if it be identified with the Universal Mind, and thence imparted to dependent natures permitted to be like Him: for, in that case, the related feelings and convictions are *true;* in the order of reality, Righteousness *is* prior to the pains and pleasures of our particular faculties and the natural exigencies of our collective life; and our allegiance is due to an eternal Perfection which penetrates the moral structure of all worlds. How then does this intuitive faith of our responsible will, this worship of an eternally Holy, stand with the cosmical conceptions now tyrannizing over the imaginations of men? It encounters the shock of contemptuous contradiction. Ethically, we are assured, the known world culminates in us. Before us, there was nothing morally good: over us, there is nothing morally better: Man himself is here the supreme being in the

universe. In the just, the beneficent, the true, there is no pre-existence: they are not the roots of reality, but the last blossoms of the human phenomena. And even there, the fair show which gives them their repute of an ethereal beauty is but the play of an ideal light upon coarse materials;—rude pleasures and ruder constraints are all that remain when the increments of fancy have fallen away. The real world provides *interests* alone; which, when adequately masked, call themselves virtues and pass for something new: and, duped by this illusion, we dream of a realm of authoritative Duty, in which the earth is but a province of a supramundane moral empire. And so, we must conclude, the Conscience which lives on this sublime but empty vision has transcended the tuition of Nature, and, in growing wiser than its teacher, has lost its foothold on Reality, only to lean on a phantom of Divine support.

On the hypothesis of a Mindless universe, such is the fatal breach between the highest inward life of man and his picture of the outer world. All that is subjectively noblest turns out to be the objectively hollowest; and the ideal, whether in life and character, or in the beauty of the earth and heaven, which he had taken to be the secret meaning of the Real, is repudiated by it, and floats through space as a homeless outcast. Even in this its desolation a devoted disciple will say, "I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest"; but how heavy the cross which he will have to bear! Religion, under such conditions, is a defiance of inexorable material laws in favour of a better which they have created but cannot sustain,—a reaction of man against Nature, which he has transcended,—a withdrawal of the Self which a resistless force pushes to the front,—a preservation of the weak whom Necessity crushes, a sympathy with sufferings which life relentlessly sets up,—a recognition of authoritative Duty which cannot be. Or will you perhaps insist that, in this contrariety between thought and fact, Religion must take the other side, discharge the

θεῖα ὀνείρατα as illusory, and in her homage hold fast to the solid world? This might perhaps in some sense be, if you only gave us a world which it was possible to respect. But, by a curious though intelligible affinity, the modern doctrine allies itself with an unflinching pessimism; it plays the cynic to the universe,—penetrates behind its grand and gracious airs, and detects its manifold blunders and impostures: what skill it has it cannot help; and the only faults and horrors that are *not* in it are those which are too bad to live. Human life, which is the summit that has been won, is pronounced but a poor affair at best; and the scene which spreads below and around is but as a battle-field at night-fall, with a few victors taking their faint shout away, and leaving the plain crowded with wounds and vocal with agony. Existence itself, insists Hartmann, is an evil, in proportion as its range is larger and you know it more, and that of cultivated men is worst of all;* and the constitution of the world (so stupidly does it work) would be an unpardonable crime, did it issue from a power that knew what it was about.† How can these malcontents find any *Religion* in obeying such a power? Can they approach it with contumely at one moment, and with devotion at the next? If they think so ill of Nature, there can be no *reverence* in their service of her laws: on the contrary, they abandon what they revere to bend before what they revile. To this humiliation the more magnanimous spirits will never stoop; they will find some excuse for still clinging to the ideal forms they cannot verify; will go apart with them with a high-toned love which stops short of faith but is full of faithfulness; will linger near the springs of poetry and art, and there forget awhile the disenchanted Actual; and will wonder perhaps whether this half-consecrated ground may not suffice, when the temples are gone, to give an asylum to the worshippers. Such loyalty of heart towards the harmonies that *ought*

* "Philosophie des Unbewussten," c. xii. p. 598.

† "Ap. Strauss: der alte und der neue Glaube," p. 223.

to prevail, with disaffection towards the discords that *do* prevail, may indeed lift the character of a man to an elevation half divine; and in his presence, Nature, were she not blind, might start to see that she had produced a god. But, for all that, she is not going to succumb to him; she can call up her lower brood to suppress him, or monsters to chain him to her rock. He contends with the lower forces, believing them to be the stronger, and fights his losing battle against hordes of inferiors ever swarming to overwhelm what is too good for the world. Such religion as remains to him is a religion of despair,—a pathetic defiance of an eternal baser power. And if there be anything tragic in earth or heaven, it is the proud desolation of a mind which has to regard itself as Highest, to know itself the seat of some love and justice and devotion to the good, and to look upon the system of the Universe as cruel, ugly, stupid and mean. The most touching episodes of history are perhaps those which disclose the life of genius and virtue under some capricious and ignoble tyranny,—asserting itself in the ostracism of an Aristides, the hemlock-cup of Socrates, the blood-bath of Thrasea; and no other than this is the life of every man who, walking only by his purest inner lights, finds that they illumine no nature but his own, and are baffled and quenched by the outer darkness.

It cannot be denied that there does exist this contrariety between the modern materialistic philosophy and religious faith. It cannot be believed that this contrariety is chargeable on any mutual contradiction among the human faculties themselves. Were we really placed between two informants that said "*Yes*" at the right ear and "*No*" at the left, we should simply be without cognitive endowment at all, and all the pulsations of thought would cancel each other and die. Can we end the strife by separating the provinces of the two opposites, and saying that the function of the one is *to know*, of the other *to create?* * Certainly, "creative"

* Professor Tyndall's Address, p. 64.

power is something grand, and Theology should perhaps feel honoured to be invested with it. But, alas! a *known* materialism and a *created* God present a combination which thought repudiates and reverence abhors; and the suggestion of which must be met with the counter affirmations, that the atomic hypothesis is a thing *not known but created*, while God is *not created but known*. The only possible basis for a treaty of alliance between the tendencies now in conflict is not in lodging the one in the Reason and the other in the Imagination, in order to keep them from quarrelling, but in recognizing a Duality in the functions of Reason itself, according as it deals with phenomena or their ground, with law or with causality, with material consecution or with moral alternatives, with the definite relations of space and time and motion, or with the indefinite intensities of beauty and values of affection which bear us to the infinitely Good. When once this adjustment of functions has been considerately made, the disturbed equilibrium of minds will be re-instated, the panic and the arrogance of our time will disappear, and the progress of the intellect will no longer shake the soul from her everlasting rest.

MODERN MATERIALISM:

ITS ATTITUDE TOWARDS THEOLOGY.

A CRITIQUE AND DEFENCE.

PREFACE.

IN reproducing the following Essay, I should gladly have divested it of all controversial character. But though in substance it is independent of its immediate occasion, its form has been so far shaped by the necessities of self-defence, as to render the features of its history indelible. Whatever personal element it contains will be found, I trust, strictly relevant to the general argument, and even indispensable to the right conception of the problem discussed. My sole object has been to reduce that problem to its essential factors, and remove the disguises thrown around it by ill-understood words. To the demand for exactitude of method in dealing with the borderland between Natural Knowledge and Theology I willingly submit. It was indeed in the interest of such a method that both this Essay and its predecessor were written: and it is to the want of it that the prevalent misunderstandings are due between the representatives of Science and the interpreters of Religion.

LONDON, *April* 5, 1876.

X.—2.

MODERN MATERIALISM: ITS ATTITUDE TOWARDS THEOLOGY.*

AT the beginning of October, 1874, it was my duty, as Principal of a Theological College, to open a new session with an Address, which was afterwards published under the title, "Religion as affected by Modern Materialism." It raises the question whether the free and scientific methods of study insisted on in the College involved results at variance with its theological design. It states accordingly three assumptions hitherto implied in that design: "That the universe which includes us and folds us round is the life-dwelling of an Eternal Mind; that the world of our abode is the scene of a moral Government incipient but not yet complete; and that the upper zones of human affection, above the clouds of self and passion, take us into the sphere of a Divine Communion." With regard to these assumptions the thesis is maintained that they are beyond the contradiction, because not within the logical range, of the natural sciences. In support of this thesis the mischiefs are shown, both to science and to theology, of confusing their boundaries, and treating the discovery of Law as the negation of God; and the separating line is drawn, that in their intellectual dealings with phenomena, science investi-

* Originally published in the *Contemporary Review*.

gates the "how" and theology the "whence." Tempted on by two of its indispensable conceptions, *matter* and *force*, science, overstepping this boundary, has of late affected to know not only the order but the origin of things; in the one case starting them from *atoms* as their source, in the other from mechanical *energy*. I try to show that neither datum will work out its result except by the aid of logical illusions. You will get out of your atoms by "evolution," exactly so much and no more as you have put into them by hypothesis. And with regard to force, it is contended that observation and induction do not carry us to it at all, but stop with *movements*; that the so-called kinds of force are only classes of phenomena, with the constant belief of causality behind; that of causality we have no cognition but as Will, from which the idea of "physical force" is simply cut down by artificial abstraction to the needs of phenomenal investigation and grouping; and that, in conceiving of the single power hid in every group, we must revert to the intuitive type, because the only authorized, and to the highest, because alone covering the highest phenomena. The attempt, under shelter of the unity of energy behind all its masks, to make the lowest phrase, besides playing its own part, stand for the whole, is described as a logical sleight of hand by which a heedless reasoner may impose upon himself and others.

After this defensive argument to show that the religious positions are not displaced by natural science, they are traced to their real seat in human nature, and treated as postulates involved in the very existence and life of the reason and conscience. In support of their natural claim to our entire trust, it is contended that, for their ethical power, they are absolutely dependent on their objective truth; and further, that our nature, in respect of its higher affections, compassion, self-forgetfulness, moral obligation, is constructed in harmony with a world Divinely ruled, and in utter conflict with the Pessimist's picture of nature.

The Address thus epitomized has brought upon me the

honour and the danger of a critique by Professor Tyndall,* marked by all his literary skill, and rendered persuasive by happy sarcasm and brilliant description. One fault at least he brings home to me with irresistible conviction. He blames my mode of writing as deficient in precision and lucidity. And I cannot deny the justice of the censure when I observe that my main line of argument has left no trace upon his memory, that its estimate of scientific doctrines is misconstrued, that my feeling towards the order of nature is exhibited in reverse, that I am cross-questioned about an hypothesis of which I never dreamt, and am answered by a charming "alternative" exposition of ascending natural processes, which I follow with assent till it changes its voice from physics to metaphysics, and from its premisses of positive phenomena proclaims a negative ontological conclusion. That at every turn I should have put so acute a reader upon a totally false scent, rebukes me more severely than any of his direct and pertinent criticisms; for, smartly as these may hit me, they fall chiefly on incidental and parenthetical remarks which might have been absent, or on mere literary form which might have been different, without affecting the purport of my Address. Whether the force of these minor thrusts is really disabling, or is only a by-play telling mainly on the fancy of the observer, a brief scrutiny will determine.

(1.) In saying that the College which I represent leaves open to all new lights of knowledge "the special studies which deal with our sources of religious faith," I expanded this phrase by the words, "whether in the scrutiny of nature or in the interpretation of sacred books." This innocent parenthesis, which simply summarizes the growing-grounds of all actual theology, produces in my critic an effect out of all proportion to its significance. Twice he challenges me to show how any "religious faith" can be

* Fragments of Science: "Materialism" and its Opponents; and, previously, *Fortnightly Review*, November 1, 1875.

drawn from "nature," which I regard, he says, as "base and cruel." It suffices to say that "scrutiny of nature" does not exclude "*human* nature," wherein the springs of religion are afterwards traced to their intuitive seats; and that, in what are called my "tirades against nature" as "base and cruel," I am describing, not my own view of the order of the world, but one which I repudiate as utterly sickly and perverse. Then, again, I am asked how, after giving up the Old Testament cosmogony, I can any longer speak of "sacred books," without informing my readers where to find them. I have occasionally met with scientific men whose ideas about the Bible, if going further than the Creation, came to an end at the Flood, and who thought it only loyal to Laplace and Lyell thenceforth to shelve "Moses and the prophets": but a judgment so *borné* I should not expect from Professor Tyndall. Can a literature then have nothing "sacred," unless it be infallible? Has the religion of the present no roots in the soil of the past, so that nothing is gained for our spiritual culture by exploring its history and reproducing its poetry, and ascending to the tributary waters of its life? The real modern discovery, far from saying there is no sacred literature, because none oracular, assures us there are several; and, notwithstanding a deepened because purified attachment to our own "Origines" in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, persuades us to look with an open reverence into all writings that have embodied and sustained the greater pieties of the world. But to my censor it appears a thing incredible that I should find a sanctity in anything human; or deem it possible to approach religion in its truth by intercepting its errors as it percolates through history, and letting it flow clearer and clearer, till it brings a purifying baptism to the conscience of our time.

(2.) In order to give distinctness to that "Religion" in relation to which I proposed to treat of "Modern Materialism," I specified "three assumptions" involved in it, of which the first and chief is the existence of the "Living

God." I am reproached with making no attempt to verify them, but permitting them to "remain assumptions" "to the end." Be it so, though the statement is not quite exact: still, in every reasoned discourse assumptions have their proper place, as well as proofs; and the right selection of propositions to stand in the one position or the other depends on the speaker's thesis and the hearers' needs. My *thesis* was, that natural science did not displace these assumptions, because they lie beyond its range; and the *proof* is complete if it is shown that the logical limit of inductive knowledge stops short of their realm, and is illegitimately overstepped by every physical maxim which contradicts them. To turn aside from this line of argument in order to "verify" the primary matter of the whole discussion, would have been to set out for Exeter and arrive at York. My *hearers* consisted of the teachers, supporters and alumni of a *Theological* College; and to treat them as a body of atheists, and offer proofs of the being of a God, would have been as impertinent as for Professor Tyndall to open the session of a *Geological* Society with a demonstration of the existence of the earth.

(3.) A few reluctant words must suffice in answer to the charge of "scorning the emotions." I say "*reluctant* words": for to this side of our nature it is given to speak without being much spoken of; to live and be, rather than be seen and known; and when dragged from its retreat, it is so hurt as to change its face and become something else.

Here, however, little more is needed than to repeat the words which are pronounced to be so "rash" and even "petulant,"—"I trust that when '*emotion proves empty*,' we shall stamp it out and get rid of it." Do I then "scorn" the "emotion" of any mind stirred by natural vicissitudes or moving realities,—the cry of Andromache, Ἕκτορ, ἐγὼ δύστηνος, at the first sight of her hero's dishonoured corpse; the covered face and silent sobs of Phædon, when Socrates had drained the cup; the tears of Peter at the cock-crowing; or any of the fervent forms of mental life,—the

mysticism of Eckhart, the intellectual enthusiasm of Bruno, the patriotic passion of Vane? Not so; for none of these are "empty," but carry a meaning adequate to their intensity. It is for "emotion" with a vacuum within, and floating *in vacuo* without, charged with no thought and directed to no object, that I avow distrust; and if there be an "overshadowing awe" from the mere sense of a blank consciousness and an enveloping darkness, I can see in it no more than the negative condition of a religion yet to come. In human psychology, feeling, when it transcends sensation, is not without idea, but is a type of idea; and to suppose "an inward hue and temperature," apart from any "object of thought," is to feign the impossible. Colour must lie upon form; and heat must spring from a focus, and declare itself upon a surface. If by referring religion to the "region of emotion" is meant withdrawing it from the region of truth, and letting it pass into an undulation in no medium and with no direction, I must decline the surrender.

In thus refusing support from "empty emotion," I am said to "kick away the only *philosophic foundation* on which it is possible to build religion." Professor Tyndall is certainly not exacting from his builders about the solidity of his "foundation"; and it can be only a very light and airy architecture, not to say an imaginary one, that can spring from such base; and perhaps it does not matter that it should be unable to face the winds. Nor is the inconsistency involved in this statement less surprising than its levity. Religion, it appears, has a "philosophical foundation." But "philosophy" investigates the ultimate ground of cognition and the organic unity of what the several sciences assume. And a "philosophical foundation" is a legitimated first principle for some one of these; it is a cognitive beginning,—a *datum* of ulterior *quæsita*,—and nothing but a science can have it. Religion then must be an organism of thought. Yet it is precisely in denial of this that my censor invents his new "foundation." Here,

he tells us, we know nothing, we can think nothing; the intellectual life is dumb and blank; we do but blindly feel. How can a structure without truth repose on philosophy in its foundation?

But do I not myself carry religious questions, in the last appeal, to the inward consciousness of man, whether intellectual for the interpretation of causality, or moral for the interpretation of duty? Undoubtedly: and Professor Tyndall thinks it "highly instructive" that I "should have lived so long, thought so much, and failed to recognize the entirely subjective character of this creed." If I may omit the word "entirely" (which implies a gratuitous exclusion of "objective truth"), I not only recognize it, but everywhere insist upon it. The fundamental religious conceptions have no deeper validity than belongs to the very frame of our faculties and the postulates of our thinking. But as this equally holds of the fundamental scientific conceptions, as matter and force have also to retire to consciousness for their witnesses,—nay, as objectivity itself is but an interpretation by the subject of its own experience, is it not "highly instructive" that a critic so compassionate to my "subjective" position should be unaware of the ideality of his own? Or has he, perhaps, found some "objective knowledge" which has not to fall back upon a "subjective" guarantee?

If, as I suspect, Professor Tyndall uses the word "subjective," not in its strict sense, for what belongs to the *human subject at large*, but to denote what is special to the feeling of *this or that individual*, the question will then be whether I mistake an exceptional personal experience for a universal form of thought. This question is not settled by saying that many able men find in themselves no such inner experience. The eye for correct psychological reading is not secured by great intellect or noble character, but, like the organ of any other art, must be trained to quickness and delicacy of insight; and, while false or overculture exposes it to the danger of seeing what is not there,

a failure of culture may prevent its seeing what there is. Right interrogation and careful comparison alone can sift out the essential from the accidental. Doubtless many a principle once advanced as self-evident and universal survives only in the grotesque museum of philosophers' fancies. But, on the other hand, whatever laws of thought are now admitted as universal were at first propounded, and often long resisted, as the expressions of individual reflection.

(4.) On one point more a personal *éclaircissement* is needed as a condition of any profitable argument. I am said to be "imperfectly informed regarding the position I assail." If I am sensitive to this remark, it is not that I cannot bear to be reminded of my ignorance, the sense of which is a shadow that never quits my life, but that, as no man has a right to attack doctrines which he has not taken the pains to understand, the statement carries in it a moral imputation, and calls on me either to clear it away or to confess a wrong. What then is the "position" which, under the name of "materialism," I intended to assail, and ought, perhaps, to have fixed by exact definition? Professor Tyndall supposes it to be *his* position, regarding which undoubtedly I am very imperfectly informed; for the indications of it, though clear enough for assent or criticism when taken one by one, appear to me so shifting and indeterminate in their combination, as to afford no means of testing it. Except in the two or three passages where it is quoted, the Belfast Address was no more in my view than the writings to which it referred and others belonging to the literature of the subject; and did not supply the form of doctrine to which my argument was addressed. The only question therefore is whether that form of doctrine really exists. If it can be shown that I have misconceived the materialists' position, and fastened upon them any thesis which is without eminent representative in their school, I must accept my rebuke. But if no part of my sketch is unsupported by adequate authority,

it will remain true, though it should conflict with sentences in the "Fragments of Science."

Probably the chief instance of "imperfect information" is this,—that I suppose the materialist doctrine to be offered as an *explanation* of the order of things; for my censor contrasts with this "travesty" of the scheme his own statement, that the materialist's "molecular groupings and movements in reality explain nothing," and that "the utmost he can affirm is the association of two classes of phenomena, of whose real bond of union he is in absolute ignorance." But surely, if this is all that he can affirm, he gives the materialism nothing to do, and is as well off without it as with it: in order simply to see that two series of phenomena run parallel, and correspond term for term, he needs no more than methodized observation, possible and identical on every theory or no theory about the substratum of the phenomena. If the human mind could be content with this spectacle of unexplained concomitance, the very impulse would be wanting from which materialism has sprung. Its fundamental proposition, common, as Lange remarks, to all its forms, ancient and modern,—"that the universe consists of atoms and empty space,"*—is an *hypothesis* devised for the express purpose of establishing a "bond of union" between lines of succession previously detached—*i.e.*, of giving the mind a bridge of passage other than that of "association" from the one to the other—*i.e.*, of *explaining* the second by the first. An hypothesis commends itself to us when (*inter alia*) it offers a higher conception from which, as an assumption, we can deduce *both* sets of previously separate facts; and so far as it fails to do this, it is self-condemned. There may be other defects in hypotheses; but if their *data* do not logically lead to the *quæsita*, they break their primary promise; and to see whether they are water-tight throughout, or are leaky at the joints, is an efficient test of their pretensions. A materialist who knows what he is about would not dis-

* "Geschichte des Materialismus, 2tes Buch," p. 181.

own the words which I put into his mouth,—"Matter is all I want; give me its atoms alone, and I will explain the universe";—but would assuredly be offended were he told, and that by a "candid friend," that his doctrine "explains nothing."

As it is impossible to come to close quarters with a see-saw doctrine, which now touches solid ground and now escapes it, I naturally addressed myself to thorough-going materialists, without presuming to commit Professor Tyndall to their consistency. That there have been and are such persons,—persons who have undertaken, by defining the essence of matter and fixing it in atoms, "to explain the enigmatical by the clear, the intricate by the simple, the unknown by the known,"*—he cannot deny, after having himself introduced us to the thesis of Democritus,†

* "Lange, Geschichte des Materialismus, 1tes Buch," pp. 8, 9.

† In connection with this name there is an historical error in the Belfast Address which I should hardly notice were it not likely to be perpetuated by the just reputation of the author, and did it not apparently fall back for support upon Lange. This writer, noticing that Democritus makes no attempt to explain the appearances of adaptation out of the blind power of natural necessity, adds, "Whether this gap lay in his system itself, or only in the tradition of it, we do not know; but we do know that the source of even this last principle of all materialism,—rudely shaped, it is true, yet with perfect precision of idea,—is to be found in the philosophic thought of the Hellenic race. What Darwin, with the support of vast stores of positive knowledge, has effected for the present time, Empedocles offered to the thinkers of antiquity,—the simple and penetrating thought that if adaptations preponderate in the world, it is because it lies in their very nature to maintain themselves; while that which fails of adaptation has perished long ago." (I. pp. 22, 23.) Misled by the order of this passage, which gives the missing thought *after* naming the "*gap*" which it might have filled, Dr. Tyndall has described Empedocles as intentionally making good a defect in Democritus,—"*Noticing this gap* in the doctrine of Democritus, he (Empedocles) struck in with the penetrative thought," &c. This is an inversion of the chronology. Empedocles preceded Democritus by at least a generation, being born about B.C. 490, and dying B.C. 430; whilst Democritus, whom we find at Thurii shortly after the foundation of the colony in B.C. 443, died at a very advanced

the reasonings of Lucretius, and the method of Gassendi.* The "atomists," says Lange, "attributed to matter only the simplest of the various properties of things,—those, namely, which are indispensable for the presentation of a something in space and time; and their aim was to evolve from these alone the whole assemblage of phenomena." "They it was," he adds, "who gave the first perfectly clear notion of what we are to understand by matter as the basis of all phenomena. With the positing of this notion materialism stood complete, as the first perfectly clear and consequent theory of all phenomena."† If there is any difference between this statement of the problem and my "travesty" of it, I cannot discern it.

The indistinctness of which I ventured to complain in Dr. Tyndall's account of his "primordial" datum, I do not find removed by my pleasant journey with him to the Caribbean Sea and the Alpine snows, or his graceful pictures of Cingalese ferns, and of nascent infant life. The whole exposition appears to be dominated by the tacit maxim, "No matter without force, no force without matter,"‡—a maxim which may be true in fact, but does not dispense with the necessity of investigating the relation between two fundamental ideas which are not identical or interchangeable. In the natural sciences no harm is done by running them both together, or resorting in varying proportions to the one and to the other. Experimental research and mathematical deduction may go on undisturbed, by mere use of them as provisional conceptions, and without even suspecting that they carry in them any ulterior problem. But it is not by thus picking them up *in*

age, B.C. 357.—*Diog. Laert.* viii. 52, 56, ix. 41. Comp. Arist. Met. A. 4, p. 985, b. 4.

* Starting from the fundamental assumption, "Principio ergo Universum ex corpore et inani constat, neque enim tertia natura concipi mente præterea potest."—*Phil. Epicur. Syntagma*, Op. T. iii. 11.

† "Geschichte des Materialismus, i. pp. 8, 9.

‡ Büchner: "Kraft und Stoff," p. 2 (Aufl. 4).

mediis rebus, and taking them as they happen to come, that we can reach any philosophical view of the world, or estimate the theories which strive to interpret its unity and meaning. In spite of the cheap wit expended in derision of metaphysics, and the brave preference avowed for *terra firma*, you can escape them only by not knowing where you are. In their embrace you live and move and have your being; and, however fast your foot may cling to the earth, none the less do you swim with it through the infinite space which, even in its emptiness, is yet the condition of all solidity.

At a first glance, nothing looks more hopeful to the enthusiast for simplification than the reduction of "matter" to "force." Two or three easy equations will carry him through the problem. Matter is known to us only by its "properties," and, relatively to us, is tantamount to them. Its properties, again, are only its ways of affecting ourselves, either directly or through operations on other portions of matter. That is, it is represented to us wholly by the *effects* which it has *power* to produce, and resolves itself into an aggregate of *forces*. Make its essence what you will, —extension, with Descartes; or palpableness, with Fechner, —it is still as acting on the eye or the touch or the muscles that this essence reaches our apprehension; it is the cause of sensations to us, and anything that should cause such sensations would be identical with it. Is it not plain therefore that matter is simply power locally lodged? and that when pursued to its smallest conceivable elements, it merges into dynamic points, unextended centres of attraction and repulsion? Such a course of thought has again and again led to theories of dynamic idealism, like Boscovich's, Ampère's, and Cauchy's, in which the dimensions of the atoms whence molecular action proceeds not simply are small relatively to the distances which separate them, but absolutely vanish. Such theories, by isolating the elements needed for calculation, offer advantages for mathematical physics. But there will always be found an irresolvable

residue which declines to melt away into force. When you have construed the atom's solidity into repulsion, and reduced its extension to nothing, there remains its *position*, and this "whereabouts" of a power is other than the power itself; and secures to it a *Da-seyn* or objective existence in space. Nor is the conception of motion adequately provided for in these schemes of abstraction. As geometrical points themselves cannot be moved, the phenomenon becomes a translation of a cluster of attractions and repulsions to new centres. But attraction with nothing to be attracted, repulsion with nothing to be repelled, motion with nothing to be moved, are presentable in language only, not in thought. The running of one eddy round another or into another is intelligible so long as there is a *medium*, be it of ether, however rare; but *in vacuo*, not so. A material *nidus* is indispensable as the seat of every motory change. The reason of this lies in the very structure of the human understanding, which supplies us with the category of Attribute or Property only in combination with that of Substance or Thing as its abiding base. The relation between the attribute which speaks to you phenomenally, and the substance which is given intellectually, is indissoluble: and analyse the phenomena as you may, so as to turn them from one type of predicate to another, you cannot cut them off from their persistent and unyielding seat, so as to have left on your hands a set of predicates without any subject. Thus the idea of "matter" vindicates itself against every attempt to get rid of it by transformation.

The simplification has also been attempted by the inverse method of dispensing with "force," and making "matter" do all the work. In physics, it is said, we know what we perceive or generalize from perception: "we observe what our senses, armed with the aids furnished by science, enable us to observe—nothing more."* *Movements*, however, are all that we perceive, and if at first this fact escapes us when

* "Materialism and its Opponents," *Fortnightly Review*, p. 595.

we hear and see, it is because our organs are not fine enough to read the undulations which deliver to them tones and tints. Submit their sensibility to adequate magnifying power, and all that is observable would resolve itself into local changes,—molecular or molar. It is the same in the celestial mechanics as in the scene of daily experience. We say that the moon goes through its lunations, and upheaves the tidal wave on the earth spinning beneath it, by the constant force of gravitation. But the real facts noticed are simply the presence, now here, now there, of two visible and solid globes, and of some piled-up water upon one of them, and a certain rule according to which these changes recur. Were these the only phenomena within our ken, this rule would be all that we mean by the "force" of which we speak. But as there are countless others which we have found to follow the same rule, we cannot speak of it without tacit reference to these, so that the word covers indefinitely more than the facts immediately in view. Still, it takes in nothing in any part of its field but movements and their law. And nothing moves but matter. The natural sciences would thus resolve themselves into a register of co-existent and sequent positions of bodies, expressed in formulas as comprehensive as the state of analysis allowed; and in this form, as Comte and Mill justly insist, they would fulfil all the conditions of phenomenal knowledge, and secure that power of *prevision* which is the crown and reward of scientific labour.

This reduction of everything to matter, motion, and law, would be unimpeachable, were our intelligence somewhat differently constructed. Matter,—as these expositors set out by observing,—speaks to our perceptive senses alone; and we should still know it, had we no more than these, and the ability to retain their vestiges and set them in order. Let us only see how things like and unlike lie and move in place and time, and the history of matter is all before us. For this purpose we need not go, among the

forms or data of the understanding, beyond the relations of objectivity, succession, and resemblance. But over and above these, we are subject to another determinate condition of thought,—the principle of causality,—in virtue of which there can be no cognition of *phenomenon*, except as relative to *power* that issues it, any more than there can be a cognition of a *here* without a *there*, or a *before* without an *after*. This intellectual law leaves us unsatisfied with merely reading the *order* of occurrence among the changes we perceive; it obliges us to refer movement to a motor, to look beyond the matter stirred to a force that stirs it, be the force *without*, as in the expansive energy which propels a loaded shell, or *within*, as in that which ultimately bursts it. In any case, you have here a clear dynamic addition to that scheme of regimented and marshalled phenomena which results from the lonely conception of matter. Will you rid yourself of the dualism by insisting, while you concede the power, that it is only a *property* of the matter?—

"See," says Lange, "whether here you are not in danger of a logical circle. A 'thing' is known to us through its properties, a subject is determined by its predicates. But the 'thing' is in fact only the resting-point demanded by our thought. We know nothing but the properties and their concurrence in an unknown object, the assumption of which is a figment of our mind (*Gemüth*), *a necessary one it seems, rendered imperative by our organization.*" *

Another answer may be given thus:—'You may make anything a predicate of matter which you can *observe* in it, *i.e.*, all its *movements*; but not what you *cannot observe*, therefore not the *power* which issues the movements; for this is not seen in the phenomenon; it is supplied by a necessity of thought, not as an element in it, but as a condition of it.'

Inasmuch then as both "matter" and "force" are intel-

* "Geschichte des Materialismus," ii. p. 214.

lectual data (*noïmena*), involved respectively in the principle of Objectivity and in that of Causality, neither can be substituted for the other. For ages each has been trying to end the divided sway; but the rival, though often driven from the front, has always found at last an impregnable retreat, whence its rights return to recognition when the usurping rage is past. The present tendency in natural science is so strongly in favour of force as the better known term, that, according to Lange, "the untrue element in materialism, viz., the erecting of matter into the principle of all that exists, is completely, and it would seem definitively, set aside."*

From these two roots have arisen two forms of naturalism, capable no doubt of a balanced co-existence in the same mind, but often unharmonized, and expressing themselves in doctrines doubtfully related to each other. The *material* theory works out the conception of *Atoms*. The *dynamic* relies on that of the *Conservation of energy*. As a means of intellectually organizing ascertained facts, and holding them together in a tissue of conceivable relations, these conceptions possess a high value, and are indispensable to the reaching of any generalizations yet higher. In the one, the multiple proportions of chemistry and the laws of elastic diffusion find an adequate vehicle of expression and computation. In the other, a common measure is set up for variations of heat and mechanical work and chemical decomposition and electrical intensity, bringing several special provinces into a federal affinity. Dr. Tyndall misconstrues me when he imputes to me any disparagement of these conceptions, in their *scientific* use, for formulating, linking, and anticipating phenomena. It is not till they break these bounds, and, mistaking their own logical character, set up *philosophical* pretensions as adequate data for the deductive construction of a universe without mind, that I venture to resist their absolutism, and set them back

* "Geschichte des Materialismus," ii. p. 215.

within their constitutional rights. It is no wonder, perhaps, that many an enthusiast in the study of nature, excited by the race of rapid discovery, should lose count of his direction as he sweeps along, and, mounted upon these hobbies, should fancy that he can ride off into the region of ontology, and finding nothing, because never really there, should mistake his own failure for its blank. But the calmer critics of human thought know how to distinguish between the physical and the metaphysical use of these conceptions.

"There is scarcely a more *naïve* expression of the materialism of the day," says Lange, "than escapes from Büchner, when he calls the atoms of modern times 'discoveries of natural science,' while those of the ancients are said to have been 'arbitrary speculative representations.' In point of fact, the atomic doctrine to-day is still what it was in the time of Democritus. It has still not lost its metaphysical character; and already in ancient times it served also as a scientific hypothesis for the explanation of natural processes."*

And respecting the law of Conservation of energy, Lange observes that, taken in its "strictest and most consequent meaning, it is anything but proved: it is only an '*Ideal of the Reason*,' perhaps however indispensable as a goal for all empirical research."† It is from no want of deference for science proper that I pass again under review the competency of these two doctrines to work out, *ab initio*, a blind cosmogony.

I.—The Atomic Materialism.

The *material* hypothesis, as I read it, and as alone I propose to comment on it, maintains that, with ultimate inorganic atoms to begin with, the present universe could be constructed. Before it can be tested, its *datum* (inor-

* "Geschichte des Materialismus," ii. 181.

† Ibid. p. 213.

ganic atoms) must be pressed into more determinate form by an explanation of the word "atoms." "Things which cannot be cut" might be all alike; or they might be variously different *inter se:* and before we start, we must know on which of these two assumptions we are to proceed. The former is the only admissible one, so long as you credit the materialist with any logical exactness. When he asks for *no more than matter* for his purpose, he must surely be understood to require nothing but the *essentials of matter*, the characters which enter into its definition; and to pledge himself to deduce out of these all the accessory characters which appear here and not there, and which discriminate the several provinces of nature. The idea of *atoms* is indeed simply the idea of "matter" *in minimis*, arising only from an arrest, by a supposed physical limit, of a geometrical divisibility possible without end; and the attributes which suffice to earn the one name give the meaning of the other. When in mathematical optics the investigator undertakes, from the conditions afforded by an undulatory elastic medium, to deduce the phenomena of refraction and polarization, he is not permitted to enlarge the data as he proceeds, and surreptitiously import into his ether chemical or other characters unnamed at first. Just as little can one who proposes to show the way from simple atoms to the finished world be allowed to swell the definition of those atoms at his convenience, and take on fresh attributes which change them from matter, ἁπλῶς, and make them now *this* sort of matter, now *that*. Whatever he thus adds to his assumption is filched from his *quæsita*, to the relief of his problem and the vitiation of its proof: and if the whole fulness of the *quæsita* is so withdrawn, and turned back to be condensed into *datum*, all deduction is given up, and the thesis is simply taken for granted.

In precisely this plight,—unless there is some reasoning between the lines which I am too dull to see,—Professor Tyndall leaves his case. He ridicules me for defining the

assumed atoms as "homogeneous extended solids," on the ground that a phrase thus restricted to the "requisites of body" gives only "a metaphysical body." * Everything which you define is, in the same sense, a "metaphysical" (more properly, a "logical") subject. The object of the definition is to specify the attributes which alone are to be considered in giving the name, and in reasoning from it. The atomist who is not content with my account of his premisses should oblige me with a better, instead of stopping short with the discovery that a definition of a class is not a full description of its individuals. When, however, I look about for my critic's correcter version of "matter" or its atoms, it is long before I learn more than that "we must radically change our notions" of it,—an injunction upon which, without further help, it is difficult to act. At length, however, on the concluding page of the critique, the missing definition turns up. "Matter I define as *that mysterious thing by which all this has been accomplished*," *i.e.*, the whole series of phenomena, from the evaporation of water to self-conscious life of man. Need I say that such a proposition is no definition, and dispenses with all proof; being simply *an oracle*, tautologically declaring the very position in dispute, that matter carries in it "the promise and potency of all terrestrial life"? The whole of the picturesque group of descriptive illustrations which lead up to this innocent dictum are only an expansion of the same *petitio principii*: they simply say, over and over again, the force immanent in matter *is* matter;—they are identical; or if not so as hitherto understood, we will have a new definition to make them so. This is not a process of reasoning, but an act of will,—a decretal enveloped in a scien-

* It becomes still more metaphysical in the hands of an eminent teacher of physical science. "L'impénétrabilité," says Pouillet, "c'est la matière. On n'a pas raison de dire que la matière a deux propriétés essentielles, *l'étendue* et *l'impénétrabilité*; ce ne sont pas des propriétés, c'est une définition." And again, "L'impénétrabilité inséparable est ce qu'on appelle un *atome*."—*Eléments de Physique experimentale*, Tom. i. p. 4.

tific nimbus. Nothing can be less relevant than to show (and nothing else is attempted) that the forces of heat, of attraction, of life, of consciousness, are attached to material media and organisms, which they move and weave and animate: this is questioned by no one. In the sense of being *immanent* in matter, and manifesting themselves by its movements, they are *material* forces; but *not* in the sense of being derivable from the essential properties of matter, *quâ* matter. And this is the only sense on which philosophies divide, and reasoning is possible.

If the essence of the materialist hypothesis be to start with matter on its lowest terms, and thence work up into its highest, I did it no wrong in taking "homogeneous extended solids" as its *specified datum*, and its *only* one; so that it constituted a system of "monism." Dr. Tyndall asks me "where and by whom" any such datum is "specified." In the CONTEMPORARY REVIEW, June, 1872, Mr. Herbert Spencer contends that "the properties of the different elements" (*i.e.*, chemical elements, hydrogen, carbon, &c.) "result from differences of arrangement, arising by the compounding and recompounding of *ultimate homogeneous units*." Here, *totidem verbis*, is the monism which I am charged with "putting into the scheme." As my critic is evidently anxious to disclaim the monistic datum, I conclude that he owns the necessity of *heterogeneous elements* to begin with, and feels with me the insecurity of Mr. Spencer's deduction of chemical phenomena from mechanical. Though I have the misfortune, in the use of this same argument,—that you cannot pass from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous,—to incur the disapproval of two great authorities, it somewhat relieves the blow to find Mr. Spencer at one with the premiss, and Dr. Tyndall ratifying the conclusion.

Before I quit this point I ought perhaps to explain, in deference to Mr. Spencer, why I venture to repeat an argument which he has answered with care and skill. In common with all logical atomists, he appeals to the case of

isomeric bodies, and especially to the *allotropic* varieties of carbon and phosphorus, to prove that, without any change of elements in kind or proportion, and even without any composition at all, substances present themselves with marked differences of physical and chemical property. There are several distinct compounds formed out of the same relative weights of carbon and hydrogen. And the simple carbon itself appears as charcoal, as black-lead, and as diamond; and phosphorus, again, in the yellow, semi-transparent, inflammable form, and as an opaque, dark-red substance, combustible only at a much higher temperature. In the absence of any variation in the material, these differences in the product are attributed to a different grouping of the atoms; and whatever their form, it is easy, within certain limits, to vary in imagination the adjustments of their homologous sides so as to build molecules of several types, and ultimately aggregates of contrasted qualities.

I admit that, on the assumption of homogeneity, we may provide a series of unlike arrangements to count off against a corresponding number of qualitative peculiarities, though it is doubtful whether the conceivable permutations can be pushed up through the throng of cases presented by organic chemistry. But the morphological differences, if adequately obtained, contribute no explanation of the observed variations of attribute. What is there in the arrangement *a b c* to occasion "activity" in phosphorus, while the arrangement *b a c* produces "inertness"? Where the products differ only in geometrical properties, and consequently in optical, the explanation may be admissible, the form and the laying of the bricks determining the outline and the density of the structure. But the deduction cannot be extended from the physical to the chemical properties, so as to displace the rule that to these heterogeneity is essential. To treat the cases of allotropy as destructive of a rule so broadly based, and fly off to a conjectural substitute, is surely a rash logic. In these cases

certainly we know of no difference of composition. But neither do we know of any difference of arrangement. The first, if we could suppose it latently there, would be a *vera causa* of the unexplained phenomena; the second, though its presence were ascertained, would still rank only as a *possible* cause of them. If, therefore, an inquirer chose to say, "From this difference of property I suspect a difference of composition," what answer could we give him from Mr. Spencer's point of view? Could we say, "We finally know carbon to be simple"? On the contrary, we are warned that "there are no recognized elementary substances, if the expression means substances known to be elementary. What chemists for convenience call elementary substances are merely substances which they have thus far failed to decompose." If we are to stand ready to see sixty-two out of the sixty-three "elements" fall analytically to pieces before our eyes, how can we feel so confident of the simplicity of phosphorus or carbon, as to make it answerable for a hypothetical reconstruction of chemical laws?

Even in the last resort, if we succeed in getting all our atoms alike, we do not rid ourselves of an unexplained heterogeneity; it is simply transferred from their nature as units to their rules of combination. Whether the qualitative difference between hydrogen and each of the other elements is conditional upon a distinction of kind in the atoms, or on definite varieties in their mode of numerical or geometrical union, these conditions are not provided for by the mere existence of homogeneous atoms; and nothing that you can do with these atoms, within the limits of their definition, will get the required heterogeneity out of them. Make them up into molecules by what grouping or architecture you will; still the difference between hydrogen and iron is not that between one and three, or any other number; or between shaped solids built off in one direction and similar ones built off in another, which may turn out like a right and a left glove. If hydrogen were

the sole "primordial," and were transmutable, by select shuffling of its atoms, into every one of its present sixty-two associates, both the tendency to these special combinations, and the effects of them, would be as little deducible from the homogeneous datum as, on the received view, are the chemical phenomena from mechanical conditions. I still think, therefore, that if you assume atoms at all, you may as well take the whole sixty-three sorts in a lot. And this startling multiplication of the original monistic assumption I understand Professor Tyndall to admit as indispensable.

Next, in the striking words of Du Bois-Reymond, I had pleaded the impossibility of bridging the chasm between Chemistry and Consciousness. The sensations of warmth, of sound, of colour, are facts *sui generis*, quite other than the undulations of any medium, the molecular movements of any structure; known on different evidence, compared by different marks, needing a different language, affections of a different subject; and defying prediction and interpretation, on the part of a stranger to them, out of any formulas of physical equilibrium and motion, or of chemical affinity and composition. They, with all the higher mental conditions, belong to a world beyond the bounds of the natural sciences,—a world into which they can *never* find their way, its phenomena being intrinsically inappreciable by their instruments of research. Here, then, in this establishment of two spheres of cognition, separated by an impassable gulf, we surely have a breach in the continuity of our knowledge: on the one side, all the phenomena of matter and motion; on the other, those of living consciousness and thought. Step by step, the "Naturforscher" may press his advance, through even the contiguous organic provinces; but at this line his movement is arrested; he stands in presence of that which his methods cannot touch;—an intellectual necessity stops him, and that for ever, at the boundary which he has reached. With this doctrine I invited my readers to compare the statement of Professor Tyndall, that, relying on

"the continuity of nature," he "cannot stop abruptly where microscopes cease to be of use," but "by an intellectual necessity crosses the boundary," and "discerns in matter the promise and potency of *all* terrestrial life," including, therefore, *conscious* life. *This* statement appeared to me inconsistent with Du Bois-Reymond's "limit to natural science," and still appears so. What is my critic's reply? He cites *another* statement of his own, which is quite consistent with the doctrine of the eminent Berlin Professor and anticipates it; a procedure by which he answers himself, not me;—and, instead of removing the contradiction, takes it home. If, as the earlier passage says, "the chasm between the two classes of phenomena" (physical processes and facts of consciousness) "remains intellectually impassable," the "intellectual necessity of crossing the boundary" is not easy to understand. In order to "discern in matter the *promise*" of conscious life, you must be able, by scrutiny of its mere physical movements, to forecast, in a world as yet insentient, the future phenomena of feeling and thought. Yet this is precisely the transition which is pronounced "unthinkable"; "we do not possess the intellectual organ, nor apparently any rudiment of the organ, which would enable us to pass, by a process of reasoning, from the one to the other." If between these statements "nothing but harmony reigns," then indeed I am justly charged with being "inaccurate."

How then does the case stand with the atomic hypothesis, as a starting-point of scientific deduction? In Dr. Tyndall's latest exposition we have it admitted—(1) that the monistic doctrine of homogeneous units will not work, and that the assumption must be enlarged to include heterogeneous chemical atoms; (2) that nothing which we can do with this magnified datum will prevent our being finally stopped at the boundary of consciousness. As these two positions are precisely those which I had taken up against the speculative materialist, it is an infinite relief to discover, when the mask of controversy is removed, the

features of a powerful ally. The whole argument sums itself up in Sir William Thomson's remark, "The assumption of atoms can explain no property of body which has not previously been attributed to the atoms themselves."

That the totality of sensible and deducible phenomena is produced by a constant amount of forces in a given quantity of matter, is a legitimate principle of modern science, and an adequate key for the interpretation of every proved or probable evolution. And in order to see what is comprised in changes that are intricately woven or fall broadly on the eye, it is often needful to take them to pieces and microscopically scrutinize them. We thus discover more exactly what they are, and how at the moment they are made up; and by doing likewise with the prior and posterior conditions of the same group, we learn to read truly the metamorphoses of the materials before us. But this is all. To suppose that by pulverizing the world into its least particles, and contemplating its components where they are next to nothing, we shall hit upon something ultimate beyond which there is no problem, is the strangest of illusions. There is no magic in the superlatively little to draw from the universe its last secret. Size is but relative, magnified or dwindled by a glass, variable with the organ of perception: to one being, the speck which only the microscope can show us may be a universe; to another, the solar system but a molecule; and in passing from the latter to the former you reach no end of search or beginning of things. If in imagination you simply recede from the molar to the molecular form of body, you carry with you, by hypothesis, all the properties of the whole into the parts where your regress ceases, and merely substitute a miniature of nature for its life-size without at all showing whence the features come. If, on the other hand, you drop attributes from the mass in your retreat to the elements, on your return you can never pick them up again: starve your atom down to a hard, geometrically perfect minimum, and you have parted with

the possibility of feeding it up to the qualitative plenitude of our actual material forms; for in mere resistance,—which is all that is left,—you have no source of new properties, only the power of excluding other competitors for its place.

Accordingly, the "atom" of the modern mathematical physics has given up its pretension to stand as an absolute beginning, and serves only as a necessary rest for exhausted analysis, before setting forth on the return journey of deduction. "A simple elementary atom," says Professor Balfour Stewart, "is probably in a state of ceaseless activity and change of form, but it is, nevertheless, always the same."* "The molecule" (here identical with "atom," since the author is speaking of a simple substance, as hydrogen) "though indestructible, is not a hard rigid body," says Professor Clerk Maxwell, "but is capable of internal movements, and when these are excited it emits rays, the wave-length of which is a measure of the time of vibration of the molecule."† "Change of form" and "internal movements" are impossible without shifting parts and altered relations; and where, then, is the final simplicity of the atom? It is no longer a pure unit, but a numerical whole. And as part can separate from part, not only in thought but in the phenomenon, how is it an "atom" at all? What is there, beyond an arbitrary dictum, to prevent a part which changes its relation to its fellows from changing its relation to the whole,—removing to the outside? Such a body, though serving as an element in chemistry, is mechanically compound, and has a constitution of its own, which raises as many questions as it answers, and wholly unfits it for offering to the human mind a point of ultimate rest. It has accordingly been strictly kept to a penultimate position in the conception of philosophical physicists like Gassendi, Herschel, and Clerk Maxwell, and of masters in the logic of science, like Lotze and Stanley Jevons.

* "The Conservation of Energy," p. 7.

† "A Discourse on Molecules," p. 12.

It is a serious question whether, in our time, atomism can any longer fulfil the condition which all the ancient materialism was invented to satisfy. The Ionian cosmogonies sprang from a genuine intellectual impulse; the desire to conquer the bewildering multiplicity of nature, and find some pervading identity which should make a woven texture of the whole; and whether it was moisture, or air, or the ether-fire, which was taken as the universal substratum, it was regarded as a *single datum*, on the simplicity of which the mind might disburden itself of an oppressive infinitude. The intention of these schemes was to *unify* all bodies in their material, and in some cases all minds as well, so as not even to allow two originals at the fountain-head, but to evolve the All out of the One. This aim was but an overstraining of the permanent effort of all scientific interpretation of the world. It strives to make things conceivable by simplification, to put what was separate into relation, what was confused into order; to read back the many and the different into the one and the same, and so lessen, as far as possible, the list of unattached and underived *principia*. The charm of science to the imagination and its gain to life may be almost measured by the number of scattered facts which its analysis can bring into a common formula. The very sand-grains and rain-drops seem to lose in multitude, when the morphological agencies are understood which crystallize and mould them. The greatness of Newton's law lies in the countless host of movements which it swept from all visible space into one sentence and one thought. No sooner does Darwin supply a verified conception which construes the endless differences of organic kinds into a continuous process, than the very relief which he gives to the mind serves, with others if not with himself, as an equivalent to so much evidence. The acoustic reduction of sounds, in their immense variety, to the length, the breadth, and the form of a wave, is welcomed as a happy discovery from a similar love of relational unity. To

simplify is the essence of all scientific explanation. If it does not gain this end, it fails to explain. Its speculative ideal is still, as of old, to reach some monistic priniciple whence all may flow; and in this interest it is, especially to get rid of dualism by dissolving any partnership with mind, that materialism continues to recommend its claims. Does it really bring in our day the simplificatin at which it aims?

Under the eye of modern science, Matter, pursued into its last haunts, no longer presents itself as one undivided *stuff*, which can be treated as a continuous substratum absorbent of all number and distinction: but as an infinitude of discrete atoms, each of which might be though all the rest were gone. The conception of them, when pushed to its hypothetical extreme, brings them no nearer to unity than *homogeneity*,—an attribute which itself implies that they are separate and comparable members of a *genus*. And what is the result of comparing them? They "are conformed," we are assured, "to a constant type with a precision which is not to be found in the sensible properties of the bodies which they constitute. In the first place, the mass of each individual," "and all its other properties, are absolutely unalterable. In the second place, the properties of all" "of the same kind are absolutely identical." * Here, therefore, we have an infinite assemblage of phenomena of Resemblance. But further, these atoms, besides the internal vibration of each, are agitated by movements carrying them in all directions, now along free paths and now into collisions.† Here, therefore, we have phenomena of Difference in endless variety. And so it comes to this, that our unitary datum breaks up into a genus of innumerable contents, and its individuals are affected both with ideally perfect correspondences and with numerous contrasts of movement. What intellect can pause

* "Discourse on Molecules," by J. Clerk Maxwell, M.A., F.R.S., p. 11.

† "Theory of Heat," by J. Clerk Maxwell, M.A., LL.D., F.R.SS. London and Edin., pp. 310, 311.

and compose itself to rest in this vast and restless crowd of assumptions? Who can restrain the ulterior question—whence then these myriad types of the same letter, imprinted on the earth, the sun, the stars, as if the very mould used here had been lent to Sirius and passed on through the constellations? Everywhere else the likenesses of individual things, especially within the same "species,"—of daisy to daisy, of bee to bee,—have awakened wonder and stimulated thought to plant them in some uniting relation to a cause beyond themselves; and not till the common parentage refers them to the same matrix of nature does the questioning about them subside. They quietly settle as derivative where they could never be accepted as original. Some chemists think, as Mr. Herbert Spencer reminds us,* that in the hydrogen atom we have the ultimate simple unit. By means of the spectroscope, samples of it, and of its internal vibrations, may be brought from Sirius and Aldebaran,—distances so great that light itself needs twenty-two years to cross the lesser of them,—into exact comparison with our terrestrial specimens; and were their places changed, there would be nothing to betray the secret. So long as no *à priori* necessity is shown for their quantity of matter being just what it is, and always the same at incommunicating distances, or for their elasticity and time of pulsation having the same measure through myriads of instances, they remain unlinked and separate starting-points; and if they explain a finite number of resemblances and differences, it is only by assuming an infinite.

But even the approach to simplicity which homogeneity would afford fails us. Notwithstanding the possibility, in the case of certain carbonates, of substituting isomorphous constituents for one another, it cannot be pretended that any evidence as yet breaks down the list of chemical elements: and, should some of them give way before further attempts at analysis, they are more likely,—if we

* *Contemporary Review*, June, 1872, p. 142.

may judge of the future from the past,—to grow to a hundred than to dwindle to one: to say nothing of the probability, already suggested by the star-spectroscope, that in other regions of space there exist elements unknown to us. At present, in place of a single type of atom, we have to set out with more than sixty, all independent, and each repeating the phenomenon of exact resemblance among its members wherever found. Perhaps you see nothing inconceivable in the self-existence of ever so many perfect facsimiles ready everywhere for the making of the worlds, and may treat it as a thing to be expected that, being there at all, they should be all alike. So much the more certain, then, must be your surprise on finding them *not* all alike, but ranging themselves under sixty heads of difference. If the similars are entitled to the position of ἀρχαί, the dissimilars are not: and if neither can prefer the claim, the atomic doctrine, when pushed into an ultimate theory of origination, extravagantly violates the first condition of a philosophical hypothesis.

Nor is its series of assumed data even yet complete. For these sixty kinds of atoms are not at liberty to be neutral to one another, or to run an intermediate round of experiments in association, within the limits of possible permutation. Each is already provided with its select list of admissible companions; and the terms of its partnership with every one of these are strictly prescribed; so that not one can modify, by the most trivial fraction, the capital it has to bring. Vainly, for instance, does the hydrogen atom, with its low figure and light weight, make overtures to the more considerable oxygen element: the only reply will be, Either none of you or two of you. And so on throughout the list. Among the vast group of facts represented by this sample, I am not aware of more than one set,—the union of the same combining elements in *multiple* doses for the production of a scale of compounds,—of which the atomist hypothesis can be said to render an account. Everything else,—the existence of "affinity" at all, its limi-

tation to particular cases so far short of the whole, the original cast of its definite ratios, its preference for unlike elements,—stands unexplained by it, or must be carried into it as a new burden of primordial assumptions. This chasm between the facts of chemistry and its speculations is clearly seen by its best teachers. Kekulé treats the symbolic notation of chemical formulas as a means of simply expressing the *fact* of numerical proportion in the combining weights.

"If to the symbols in these formulas" (he adds) "a different meaning is assigned, if they are regarded as denoting the atoms of the elements with their weights, as is now most common, the question arises, 'What is the relative size or weight of the atoms?' Since the atoms can be neither measured nor weighed, it is plain that to the hypothetical assumption of determinate atomic weights we have nothing to guide us but speculative reflection." *

The more closely we follow the atomist doctrine to its starting-point, and spread before us the necessary outfit for its journey of deduction, the larger do its demands appear; and when, included in them, we find an unlimited supply of absolutely like objects, all repeating the same internal movements,—an arbitrary number of unlike types, in each of which this demand is reproduced, and a definite selection of rules for restricting the play of combination among these elements,—we can no longer, in the face of this stock of self-existent originals, allow the pretence of simplicity to be anything but an illusion.

Large as the atomist's assumptions are, they do not go one jot beyond the requirements of his case. He has to deduce an orderly and determinate universe, such as we find around us, and to exclude chaotic systems where no equilibrium is established. In order to do this he must pick out the special conditions for producing this particular cosmos and no other, and must provide against the turning

* "Lehrbuch der organischen Chemie, ap. Lange, Geschichte des Materialismus," ii. p. 191.

up of any out of a host of equally possible worlds. In other words, he must, in spite of his contempt for final causes, himself proceed upon a preconceived world-plan, and guide his own intellect as, step by step, he fits it to the universe, by the very process which he declares to be absent from the universe itself. If all atoms were round and smooth, he thinks no such stable order of things as we observe could ever arise; so he rejects these forms in favour of others. By a series of such rejections he gathers around him at last the select assortment of conditions which will work out right. The selection is made, however, not on grounds of *à priori* necessity, but with an eye to the required result. Intrinsically the possibilities are all equal (for instance), of round and smooth atoms, and of other forms; and a problem therefore yet remains behind, short of which human reason will never be content to rest, viz.: How came they to be so limited as to fence off competing possibilities, and secure the actual result? Is it an *eternal* limitation, having its "*ratio sufficiens*" in the uncaused essence of things; or *superinduced* by some power which can import conditions into the unconditioned, and mark out a determinate channel for the "stream of tendency" through the open wilds over which else it spreads and hesitates? It was doubtless in view of this problem, and in the absence of any theoretic means of excluding other atoms than those which we have, that Herschel declared them to have the characteristics of "manufactured articles." This verdict *amuses* Dr. Tyndall; nothing more. He twice * dismisses it with a supercilious laugh; for which perhaps, as for the atoms it concerns, there may be some suppressed "*ratio sufficiens.*" But the problem thus pleasantly touched is not one of those which *solventur risu;* and, till some better-grounded answer can be given to it, that on which the large and balanced thought of Herschel and the masterly penetration of Clerk Maxwell have alike settled with content, may claim at least a provisional respect.

* Belfast Address, p. 26. *Fortnightly Review*, Nov. 1875, p. 598.

Having confined myself in this section to the Atomic Materialism, I reserve for the next the consideration of the Dynamic Materialism, and the bearings of both on the primary religious beliefs. To those,—doubtless the majority in our time,—who have made up their minds that behind the jurisdiction of the natural sciences no rational questions can arise, and from their court no appeal be made, who will never listen to metaphysics except in disproof of their own possibility, I cannot hope to say any useful word: for the very matters on which I speak lie either on the borders of their sphere, or in quite another. I am profoundly conscious how strong is the set of the *Zeitgeist* against me, and I should utterly fail before it, did it not sweep by me as a mere pulsation of the *Ewigkeitsgeist* that never sweeps by. Nor is it always, even now, that physics shut up the mind of their most ardent and successful votary within their own province, rich and vast as that province is. "It has been asserted," says Professor Clerk Maxwell, "that metaphysical speculation is a thing of the past, and that physical science has extirpated it. The discussion of the categories of existence, however, does not appear to be in danger of coming to an end in our time; and the exercise of speculation continues as fascinating to every fresh mind as it was in the days of Thales."*

II.—The Dynamic Materialism.

It is curious to observe how little able is even exact science to preserve its habitual precision, when pressed backward past its processes to their point of commencement, and brought to bay in the statement of their "first truth." The proposition which supplies the initiative is sure to contain some term of indistinct margin or contents: and usually it will be the term least suspected, because most familiar. The student of nature takes as his principle that all phenomena arise from a fixed total of force in a given

* Experimental Physics, Introductory Lecture, *ad finem*.

quantity of matter; and assumes that, in his explanations, he must never resort to any supposed addition or subtraction of either element. In adopting this rule he must know, you would say, what he means by "matter," and what by "force," and that he means two things by the two words. Ask him whence this principle has its authority. If he pronounces it a metaphysical axiom, you may let him go till he can tell you how there can be not simply an *à priori notion* of matter and *notion* of force, but also an *à priori measure* of each, which can guarantee you against increase or diminution of either. As standards of quantity are found only in experience, he will come back with a new answer, fetched from the text-books of science: that his principle is inductively gathered; in one half of its scope—viz., that neither matter nor force is ever destroyed, —proved by positive evidence of persistence;— in the other half,—viz., that neither is ever created,—proved by negative evidence, of non-appearance. If now you beg him to exhibit his proof that matter is indestructible, he will in some shape reproduce the old experiment of weighing the ashes and the smoke, and re-finding in them the fuel's mass: his appeal will be to the balance, his witnesses the equal weights. Weight, however, is force: and thus, to establish the perseverance of *matter*, he resorts to equality of *force*. Again, when invited to make good the corresponding position, of the conservation of force, he will show you how, *e.g.*, the chemical union of carbon and oxygen in the furnace is followed by the undulations of heat, succeeded in their turn by the molecular separation of water into steam, the expansion of which lifts a piston, and institutes mechanical performances: *i.e.*, he traces a series of movements, each replacing its predecessor, and leaving no link in the chain detached. *Movements*, however, are material phenomena: so that to establish the persistence of *force*, he steps over to take counsel of *matter*. He makes assertions about each term, as if it were an independent subject: but if his assertion respecting either is challenged, he invokes

aid from the other: and he holds, logically, the precarious position of a man riding two horses with a foot on each, hiding his danger by a cloth over both, and saved from a fall by dexterous shifting and exchange.

Nothing can be more unsatisfactory than a scientific proposition, the terms of which stand in this variable relation to each other. The first of them has been sufficiently fixed in discussing the *Atomic* conception. It remains to give distinctness to the second. In order to do so, it will be simplest to follow into their last retreats of meaning the parallel doctrines of the "Indestructibility of Matter" and of the "Conservation of Energy." If our perceptions were so heightened and refined that nothing escaped them by its minuteness or its velocity, what should we see, answering to those doctrines, during a course of perpetual observation?

1. We should see the ultimate atoms; and if we singled out any one of them, and kept it ever in view, we should find it, in spite of "change of form," "always the same." "A simple elementary atom," says Professor Balfour Stewart, "is a truly immortal being, and enjoys the privilege of remaining unaltered and essentially unaffected by the most powerful blows that can be dealt against it."* Here, then, we have alighted upon the "Matter" which is "indestructible."

2. These atoms might have been stationary; and we should still have seen them in their "immortality." But they are never at rest. They fly along innumerable paths: they collide and modify their speed and their direction: they unite: they separate. However long we look, there is no pause in this eternal dance: if one figure ceases, another claims its place. As in the atoms, so in the molecules which are their first clusters, there is a "state of continual agitation," "vibration, rotation, or any other kind of relative motion";† "an uninterrupted warfare going on,

* "The Conservation of Energy," p. 7.

† "Theory of Heat," by J. Clerk Maxwell, p. 306.

—a constant clashing together of these minute bodies."* In this unceasing *movement* among the "immortal" atoms we alight upon the phenomenon, or series of phenomena, described by the phrase "Conservation of Energy." So far as the law thus designated claims to be an observed law, gathered by induction from experience, this is its last and whole meaning. We have only to scrutinize its evidence with a little care, in order to see that it simply traces a few transmutations of the perpetual motions attributed to atoms and molecules.

If we chose to shape it thus: "For every cancelled movement or element of movement there arises another, which is equivalent"; everything would be expressed to which the evidence applies. Had we to look out for a proof of such a proposition, we should first consider what it is that makes two movements equivalent: and, in the simplest case,—of homogeneous elements,—we should find it in equal numbers with the same velocity; so that the direct demonstration would require that we should count the atoms and estimate their speed. As we cannot count them, one by one, we *weigh* them in their masses;—an operation which has the advantage of reckoning at one stroke, along with their relative numbers, also the most important of their velocities. The atoms being all equal, the greater mass expresses the larger number. And weight is only the arrested velocity with which, in free space, they move to one another: it is prevented motion, in the shape of pressure. In order to measure it, *i.e.*, to express it in terms of space and time, we might withdraw the prevention, and address ourselves to the path that would then be described. But it is more convenient to test it by taking it in reverse, and trying what other prevented motion will avail to stop it and hold it ready to turn back. Thus even statical estimates of equilibrium are but a translation of motion into more compendious terms.

If this is a true account of common weights, it still more

* "Conservation of Energy," by Dr. Balfour Stewart, p. 7.

evidently applies to the process which gives us the *foot-pound*, or "unit of work"; for this is found by the actual *lifting* of one pound through one vertical foot, *i.e.*, by *moving* it through a space in a time. And as in this, which is the standard, so in all the changes which it is employed to measure, the fundamental quantity is simply *movement*, performed, prevented, or reversed.

This fact is easily traced through the proofs usually offered of the Conservation of Energy. The essence of them all is the same:—for each extinguished "unit of work," they find a substituted equivalent movement, molar or molecular. Dr. Joule, for instance, establishes for us a common measure of heat and mechanical work. How does he accomplish this? By applying the descent of a weight to create in moving water friction enough to raise the temperature 1° Fahrenheit; and finding that this result corresponds with a fall of the water through 772 feet. Here, on one side of the equation, we have the movement of the mass through its vertical path; on the other, the molecular movement that constitutes heat, measured by a third movement of an expanding liquid in the thermometer. Where the first is arrested, the second takes its place: and to double one would be to double both.

If heat is made to do chemical work, its undulations are similarly expended in setting up a fresh order of movements; of atomic combination, when burning coal unites with oxygen; of separation, when the fire of a lime-kiln drives its carbonic acid from the chalk. The friction which parts the electricities, the spark which attends their reunion; the crystallization of liquids by loss of temperature, and their vaporization by its increase; the waste of animal tissue by action, and its replacement by food; all reduce themselves to the same ultimate rule,—the exchange of one set of movements or resistances (*i.e.*, stopped movements) for another, which, wherever calculable, is found to be an equivalent.

To a perfect observer, then, able to follow the changes

of external bodies, in themselves and among one another, to their last haunts, nothing would present itself but consecutions and assortments of phenomena, and arrests of phenomena. And if he had noticed, and could name, what on the subsidence of each group would emerge to replace it, he would be master of the law of Conservation. The sciences would distinguish themselves for him by taking cognizance each of its special set of phenomena; as acoustics tell the story of one kind of undulations, optics of another, thermotics of a third. And the law in question would only carry his glance, as it chased the flight of change, across the lines of this divided work, and show him, on the desertion of *this* field, a new stir in *that*.

Though the whole objective world has thus been laid bare before him, and he has read and registered its order through and through, he has not yet, it will be observed, alighted on a single *dynamic* idea: all that he has seen (and nothing has been hid from him) may be stated without resort to any term that goes beyond the relations of co-existence and sequence. The whole vocabulary of causality may absent itself from the language of such an observer. Were it even given to him, it would carry no new meaning, but only tell over again in fresh words the old story of regular time succession. He might, as Comte and Mill and Bain truly contend, command the whole body of science, including its latest law, without ever asking for the origin (other than the phenomenal predecessor) of any change.

By no such ideal interpreter of nature, however, have our actual books of science been written. Never more than now have they abounded in the language which, we have seen, would be superfluous for him. The formula of the new law contains it: for it is the conservation of "Energy," or the correlation of "Forces," which it announces. Are these then some new-comers that we have got to know? or, have we encountered them before under other names, and only found out some new thing about

them? "Energy," says Professor Balfour Stuart, "is the power of overcoming obstacles or of doing work."* I see a flash of lightning pierce a roof and kill a man, and plunge into the earth: the obstacles overcome, the work done, are visible enough; but where is the power?" what does it add to the phenomenon, over and above these elements? Besides the flash of lightning first, and then the changes in the roof and the man, is there something else to be searched for, and entered, as an object of knowledge, under a separate name? If there be such a thing, by what sense am I to apprehend it? through what aids of art can I penetrate to it? It is obvious that it has no perceptible presence at all; and that its name stands in the definition and in every inductive equation, as an x, an unknown quantity, which itself has to be found before it can add any new relation to the known. "Force," says Professor Clerk Maxwell, "is whatever changes or tends to change the motion of a body, by altering either its direction or its magnitude."† The shot fired from a gun at a moderate elevation is scarcely out of the muzzle before it quits the straight line for the parabola, and slackens its initial velocity, and soon alights upon the ground. We say the deflection is due to "gravitation." But, if so, this is an invisible part of the fact: no more is observable than the first direction and subsequent curvature of the ball's path, the changing speed, and the final fall, in presence of the earth. The "force" which we superadd in thought is not given in the phenomenon as perceived: and if we know the movements accomplished, prevented, modified, we know everything that is there.

One interpretation, indeed, may be given to these mysterious words, which makes them not superfluous, in a methodized account of the order of nature. "Gravitation" perhaps may mean only the *rule of happening* which, along with the deflection of the shot, describes also several other

* "Conservation of Energy," p. 13.

† "Theory of Heat," p. 83.

cases of movement; and if it enables us to advert to these while in presence of the immediate fact, it performs a truly scientific function. It is plain, however, that this is not what our Dynamic writers mean. A rule does not "change the motion of a body," does not "overcome obstacles and do work"; nor would anyone dream of attaching such predicates to mere similarities of occurrence.

Our instructors then suppose themselves acquainted with more than phenomena, more than the laws of them; and believe that inductive analysis has carried them behind these to "the hiding-place of *power*." They tell us, with much ease and unanimity, what they have found there: so that the story is familiar to every advanced schoolboy, and reproduced in hundreds of examination papers every year. They have found, as sources of the phenomena, a considerable number of "Energies" of nature, which they distinguish from one another in various ways, as "strong" or "weak," as stretching far or keeping near, as demanding the unlike or content with anything, as single or splitting into opposites, as inorganic or organic. In every text-book of science a complete list of these is presented; and the student, as he learns how to discriminate them, cannot doubt that he is dealing, in each instance, with a separate unit of objective knowledge, which is the inner fountain of a definite set of outward changes. He thus is brought to conceive of nature as having many springs. Its multitudinousness is commanded by a senate of powers.

Further, it is impossible, on looking at the faces of these assembled forces, to assign the same rank to all, or miss the traits of graduated dignity which make them rather a hierarchy than a committee. The delicate precision with which chemical affinity picks its selecting way among the atoms, is an advance upon the indiscriminate grasp of gravitation at them all. The architecture of a crystal cannot vie with that of a tree. The sentiency of the mollusk is at an immeasurable distance from the thought which produces the *Méchanique Céleste*. Hence, in the company

of powers that conduct the business of nature, a certain order of lower and higher establishes itself, which, without settling every point of precedency, at least marks a few steps of ascent, from the mechanical at the bottom to the mental at the top. All equally real, all equally old, they are differenced by the quality of the work they have to do.

On the imagination thus prepared, a new discovery is now flung. Keenly watch the face of any one of these forces; its features will change into those of another. You cannot fix its identity in permanence; it migrates from species to species. Now it is mechanical energy; in a minute it will be heat; if a tourmaline is near, it will turn up as electricity; and so on; for no part of the cycle is closed against it. You look, in short, upon a row of masks, behind which the "unknown power," slipping from one to another with magic agility, seems to multiply itself, but is found, on closer scrutiny, never to quit its unity. The senate of nature does but administer a monarchy.

And so, the plurality of forces disappears from the ultimate background, and comes to the front as a mere semblance. This brings up a new problem. What stands in the dynamic place thus vacated? How is it related to the disguises it assumes? Do they in any way represent it? or do they only hide it? To this question there are three answers given. (1.) The One Power is indifferently related to all its masks, but is like none of them; they are opaque and let no lineament shine through. (2.) The "phases" are not on an equal footing, but consecutive in their genesis, the *lowest* being the oldest. With *that* the One Power was at first identical, and *that* is what truly represents its essence. (3.) The "phases" are consecutive in their genesis, the *highest* being the oldest. With *that* the One Power is for ever identical; all else is its action, but not its image. The second of these is the materialist's answer. His preference for it is mainly determined by two reasons. In the first place, since the several forces, A, B, C, D, &c., are all interchangeable, it suffices to allow

A (the mechanical), and all the rest are provided for. In the second place, the traces of actual evolution follow this order, conducting us back past the dawn of life, and even the combinations of chemistry, to a period of purely mechanical energy. In estimating these reasons I will step for a moment on to their own ground, and postpone all objection to the theory of "energies" on which they rest.

It is true that, among a number of interchangeables, if the first be given, the others are potentially there. But it is no less true that if the last be given, or any intermediate, there is provision for the rest. The possibility of reciprocal transmutation all round, determines no preference of any member as having priority over the rest, and cannot be pleaded as an excuse for selecting the rudest mask of nature as the most faithful likeness of its inner essence. The law of Conservation is impartial, and tells in both directions, exhibiting the elements of the world, here living up into the self-conscious, there dying down into the inorganic, and suggesting, rather than any initial point, circling currents of crossing change.

But further, there is not the slightest ground, in the present transmutations, for treating the lowest phase of force as adequate to the production of the highest. Though mechanical energy, now that it stands in presence of the several chemical elements, may pass into chemical form, it does not follow that it could do so in their absence; for this would be to predicate of homogeneous atoms what we know only of heterogeneous. And the same consideration applies to the places higher in the scale. *Given*, the existing materials and conditions of life and mind, and the circulation and equivalence of forces may take place as alleged; but that the order could be inverted, and the equivalence avail to provide the conditions, cannot be inferred. Take, on the other hand, any higher "phase" as first, and it carries all below it. Chemical force presupposes mechanical (as cohesion), and acts at its expense; *and vital presupposes* and modifies the inorganic chemical.

In this order of derivation, therefore, the original *datum* would yield what is required by divesting itself of certain conditions admitted to be there, while in the opposite order it would have to take on fresh conditions assumed to be absent at its start. If, in choosing from the phases of force the fittest representative form, we are to be guided by the possibility of deduction, the supreme term must surely be taken as First.

The second plea of the "materialist," viz., that the vista of evolution recedes into the simply mechanical, and is intersected at dimly seen stages, by entering lights, first of chemical affinity, then of life, and finally of consciousness, it is the less necessary to qualify as a statement of fact, because it is destitute of logical cogency. Granted that at successive eras these new forces appeared upon the scene, this supplies the "when," but not the "whence" of each. Something more is needful, if you would show that it is the product of its predecessor. Instead of advancing from behind, it may have entered from the side. You cannot prove a pedigree by offering a date. Since these several forces are but secondary phases of a Unitary Power, what obliges us to derive them one from another, instead of letting them all stand in equal and direct relation to their common essence? On this point the first answer to the inquiry after the One Power has a conclusive advantage over the second.

Such, it seems to me, would be the logical position of the materialist's case, on the assumption that separate kinds and transmutations of energy are known to us, over and above the resulting phenomena, as discoveries of natural science. That assumption, hitherto conceded, I must now withdraw. No "energy" has ever come under human notice, and disclosed its marks, so as to discriminate itself from others, similarly apprehended. This is not simply true thus far as a matter of fact: it is true permanently as a matter of necessity. We might watch for ever the relations of bodies and their parts *inter se*, and though we had eyes that ranged from the microscopic minimum to the

analysis of the milky way, we should fetch no force into the field of view: and the whole story of what was laid open to us would be a record of interminable series and eddies of change. What are called the "transmutations of energy" are nothing but transitions from one chapter of that record to another. A certain catena of phenomena runs to an end; the first link of a new one is ready to take its place: a body's fall is stopped; its temperature rises; the thermometer in the kettle ascends to 212° Fahrenheit and stays there; the water turns to steam; this is observed, and no more than this. And the list of metamorphosed energies deceives us, if we take it for anything beyond an enumeration of these junctures between class and class of consecutive movements. Did we bring to the contemplation of nature no faculties but those which constitute our scientific outfit, I see no reason to believe that it would come before us under any other aspect; or that we should ever be tempted to paint its picture or tell its history in dynamic terms.

Are such terms then illusory? Are they susceptible of no meaning? or of only a false meaning? Far from it. The thought that is in them we cannot indeed fetch out of nature; but we are obliged to carry it into nature. To witness phenomena, and let them lie and dispose themselves in the mere order of time, space, and resemblance, is to us impossible. By the very make of our understanding we refer them to a *Power* which issues them: and no sooner is perception startled by their appearance than the intellect completes the act by wonder at their source. This "power," however, being a postulate intuitively applied to phenomena, and not an observed function found in them, does not vary as they vary, but mentally repeats itself as the needed prefix to every order of them: and though it may thus migrate, now into this group, now into that, it is the dwelling alone which changes, and that which is immanent is ever the same. You can vary nothing in the total fact, except the collocations of material conditions;

out of which, as each new adjustment emerges, the persistent Power elicits a different result. Instead of first detecting many forces in nature and afterwards running them up into identity, the mind imports one into many collocations: never allowing it to take different names, except for a moment, in order to study its action, now here, now there. If this be true, if causality be not seen, but thought, if the thought it carries belongs to a rule of the understanding itself, that every phenomenon is the expression of power, two consequences follow: the plurality of forces disappears: and, to find the true interpretation of the One which remains, we must look not without but within; not on the phenomena presented, but on the rational relations into which they are received. Power *is* that which *we mean by it;* nor have we any other way of determining its nature than by resort to our self-knowledge. The problem passes from the jurisdiction of natural science to that of intellectual philosophy. Thither let us follow it.

I have already hinted that if we were mere passive, though thinking, observers of the world around us, we should witness phenomena without asking for a power: the principle of causality would remain latent in the intellect: the occasion would be wanting which permits it to awake. That occasion is furnished by the active side of our nature, by our own spontaneous movement from its inner centre out upon objects near its circumference. Being conscious as originators of the exercise of power, we admit as recipients its exercise upon us: nor is causality conceivable except upon these meeting lines of action and reaction; any more than, in the case of position, a *here* is conceivable without a *there*. Both pairs, the dynamic and the geometrical, are functions of the same fundamental antithesis, of subject and object, which is involved in every cognitive act. Till we disengage ourselves from nature, we do not think, though we may feel; and when we disengage ourselves from nature, we are self-conscious subjects and objects of causal operation. The idea of power coming in

this dual form, as out from us and on to us, its two sides are reciprocally related; and that which the inner side is to the *object*, the same is the outer side to the *subject*. With the inner side, however, we are intimately familiar: it is the one thing which we immediately know; unless, indeed, it sits so near our centre as rather to regulate our knowing than stand off enough to become itself the known: but in any case we have to mark it by a name, as the inmost nucleus of dynamic thought: we call it living *Will*. This is our causality; it is what we mean by causality: in the absence of this, no other source for the idea,—in the presence of this, no other meaning for it can be found. It is true, that of the reciprocal propositions, "We push against the wind," "The wind pushes against us," we know the force named in the first with a closeness not belonging to our knowledge of the other. We cannot identify ourselves with the wind as our own *nisus* is identified with us. We go out on an energy: we return home on a thought. But that thought is only the reflex of the energy; it has, and can have, no other type. Our whole idea of *Power* is identical with that of *Will*, or reduced from it. That which, in virtue of the principle of causality, we recognize as immanent in nature, is homogeneous with the agency of which we are conscious in ourselves. Dynamic conceptions have either this meaning, or no meaning: cancel this, and you cut them at the root, and they wither into words; and your knowledge, cast out into dry places, has to take refuge again with co-existences and successions. Whatever authority attaches to the law of causality at all, attaches to it, presumably at least, in its intuitive form,—phenomena are the expression of living energy; and cannot be reduced within narrower limits, unless by express disproof of coincidence between its natural range and its real range. Till that disproof is furnished, the One Power stands as the Universal Will.

I am aware what courtesy it would require in a modern *savant*, whether of the Nescient or of the Omniscient

school, to behave civilly to such folly as this must seem to him: nor can I pretend to find his laughter a pleasant sound: for I honour his pursuits, and sorrowfully dispense with his sympathy. It makes amends, however, that even among the most rigorous scientific thinkers, some curious testimony or other from time to time turns up to the correctness of the interpretation just given of the idea of power. Even Gassendi, the modern Epicurus, the eager disciple of Copernicus and Galileo, cannot refrain from resorting to living and conscious action, in explanation of physical. To render the earth's attraction intelligible, he has two favourite devices. He lays it down that every whole nature has a sort of clinging affection for all its parts, and resists their being torn or kept away from it; so that the earth sends out invisible arms or tentacula to fetch back objects detached from it; and hence the fall of the rain, the hail, the stone from the sling.* And he institutes a double comparison:—first assimilating the earth to a magnet; and then the magnet's force to the fascinating or repulsive influence of objects upon the senses,—the sweetness of the rose which draws us to it, the noisomeness of a drain, that drives us away.† In this appeal to "sympathy" and "antipathy" we see again, as already in the φιλία of Democritus, how inevitably the imagination, even when most intent on keeping within physical limits, is betrayed into mental analogies. Not a few, indeed, of the most clear-sighted men of science have been well aware of the real source of our dynamic conceptions; in some cases accepting it as authoritative, in others being ashamed of it as a mere occasion of superstition. Redtenbacher, in his "Principles of Mechanical Physics," refers our knowledge of "the existence of forces to the various effects which they produce, and *especially to the feeling and*

* De motu impresso a Motore translato, xii. Opera, Lugd. 1658, tom. iii. p. 491.

† Syntagma Philos. Phys. sect. iii. mem. I. lib. iii. p. ii. Op. 132; and De motu impresso, xiii. tom. iii. p. 492.

consciousness of our own forces."* And in conversation with Fechner, Professor E. H. Weber laid stress on the fact, that in the will to move the body occurs the only case of immediate consciousness of power operative on matter; and he accordingly identified the essence of power with that of will, and from this principle worked out his religious ideas.† That it is not, however, in the mere interest of a religious theory that this doctrine finds its strength, is evident from its hold on Schopenhauer, who, in virtue of it, would call the inward principle of nature nothing but *will*, though striking out from that name whatever makes its meaning divine. Herschel's judgment, often criticized but never shaken, was deliberately pronounced :—

"That it is our own immediate consciousness of *effort* when we exert force to put matter in motion, or to oppose and neutralize force, which gives us this internal conviction of *power* and *causation* so far as it refers to the material world, and compels us to believe that whenever we see material objects put in motion from a state of rest, or deflected from their rectilinear paths and changed in their velocities if already in motion, it is in consequence of such an *effort somehow* exerted, though not accompanied with *our* consciousness."‡

With the tone of this memorable statement it is interesting to compare the feeling of one who, owning the same psychological fact, treats it as an infirmity, instead of accepting it as a guide.

"Power, regarded as the cause of motion, is nothing," says Du Bois-Reymond, "but a more recondite product of the *irresistible tendency to personify* which is impressed upon us;—a rhetorical artifice, as it were, of our brain, snatching at a figurative turn of thought, because destitute of any conception clear enough for literal expression. In the notions of Power

* "Das Dynamidensystem, Grundzüge einer mechanischen Physik," p. 12, ap. Lange; "Gesch. d. Materialismus," ii. p. 205.

† Fechner, "Ueber die physikalische und philosophische Atomenlehre; 2te Aufl.," p. 132 (note).

‡ "Treatise on Astronomy, 1833"; Ch. vii. § 370.

and Matter we find recurring the same dualism which presents itself in the ideas of God and the world, of soul and body; the same want which once impelled men to people bush and fountain, rock, air, and sea, with creatures of their imagination. What do we gain by saying it is reciprocal Attraction whereby two particles of matter approach each other? Not the shadow of any insight into the nature of the process. But, strangely enough, our inherent quest of causes is in a manner laid to rest by the involuntary image tracing itself before our inner eye, of a hand which gently draws the inert matter to it, or of invisible tentacles, with which the particles clasp together, try to seize each other, and at last twine together into a knot."*

This outburst of exasperation against all dynamic conceptions,—for to that length it really goes,—is justified if the human mind has nothing to do but to become an accomplished Naturforscher. It is quite true that "insight into the nature of a process" is gained only by a closer reading of its steps in their series and in their analogies, and is in no way aided by passing behind the movements they comprise. What then? Shall we be angry at our propensity to look behind them, and tear it from our nature under vows to reach a stainless intellect? We shall but emasculate the mind we wish to purify: for what is the nerve of its vigour but the very Wonder which is for ever seeking an unattainable rest? If we incessantly press into nature, it is in hope of finding what is beyond nature: and all that we have learned of the finite world indirectly comes from our affinity with the embracing Infinite. It would be strange if the Causal appetency, which no disappointment wears out, should be at once our greatest strength and our most fatal illusion. It is admitted to be "irresistible": it is admitted to carry the belief of personality: but these features, which induced Herschel to yield to it and trust in it, are reasons with Du Bois-Reymond for resisting and despising it. I need hardly say that, when he calls its

* "Untersuchungen über thierische Electricität"; I. Bd. Berlin, 1848. Vorrede, S. xi. ap. Lange's Gesch. d. Materialismus, ii. 204.

language "figurative" and its conception a "personification," he oracularly assumes the very point at issue. To "personify" is to invest with personality that which has it not: and to tell anyone with Herschel's belief that he does this, is only to contradict him. So again, if you know that there are two things of different type, living power and dead power, and then transfer to the second the marks of the first, your language is "figurative": but if to you the types are identical, the second coinciding with the first, you speak with literal exactitude; and to charge you with rhetoric is only to beg the question in dispute. Probably the writer was the less conscious of any dogmatism here, from his thoughts already running upon the stock example of belief in the Pagan gods of "rock and air and sea,"—fairly enough adducible as a departed superstition. But the dying-out of Polytheism is misconceived if it be regarded as an expulsion of every Conscious Presence from venerated haunts, and the substitution of a dead for a living world. It was a fusion, not an extinction, of Will: as the little cantons of nature, once under independent guardians, melted into ever wider provinces, and clans of men clustered into confederated nations, the detected harmony of the cosmos and the felt unity of humanity carried with them the enthronement of a single Divine Mind in place of the vanished local gods. It is not that other and other powers have been discovered, but that fewer and fewer have been needed, till the plurality is lost in One Supreme. And as, with the widening scope of the natural order, the many wills lapsed into one, so, among monotheists, did the many motives of that One, once so freely attributed, more and more merge themselves in the recognition of an all-comprehending scheme, whose thoughts were not acts but laws, and whose purpose flowed into the inlets of individual life from an ocean of universal relations. By this surrender of providences *in exiguis* we drop the quest of design in events taken one by one, and learn to speak of the power which produces them, and to divide

it into lots, not according to their supposed aims, but according to their visible kinds: and thus it is that by suspending the idea of an end in view, the full-bodied notion of Will is attenuated to that of Force. How imperfectly, even then, the life is driven out of it, may be seen from Du Bois-Reymond's expostulation with it. And the suspended idea only flits away to settle upon a higher point. Instead of having discovered that *purpose is not there*, we have simply learned that purpose takes in more; and the little pulses of separate volition are lost in the mighty movements of Eternal Thought.

In the remarkable passage which I have quoted, and in the argument of which it forms a part, Du Bois-Reymond puts Matter and Force on the same footing, and discharges the former as well as the latter from the realm of reality, by reducing it also to an empty abstraction. He is led to this position by that just logical appreciation which gives to his writings, as to those of Helmholtz, a high philosophical rank, in addition to their value as models of scientific exposition and research. The equipoise, true enough, is perfect, in respect to validity, between the ideas of Matter and of Power; and the only question is, whether both are to be dismissed as illusions, or both retained as intuitive data of thought, the conditions of all construed experience. To reject them both is practically impossible, though logically necessary if you part with either. To retain them both is simply to accept the fundamental relation of object and subject under its two constitutive functions instead of treating our only modes of knowing as snares of ignorance. The existence of a Universal Will and the existence of Matter stand upon exactly the same basis,—of certainty if you trust, of uncertainty if you distrust, the *principia* of your own reason. For my part, I cannot hesitate. Shall I be deterred by the reproach of "anthropomorphism"? If I am to see a ruling Power in the world, is it folly to prefer a man-like to a brute-like power, a seeing to a blind? The similitude to man means no more and goes no further

than the supremacy of intellectual insight and moral ends over every inferior alternative: and how it can be contemptible and childish to derive everything from the highest known order of power rather than the lowest, and to converse with Nature as embodied Thought instead of taking it as a dynamic engine, it is difficult to understand. Is it absurd to suppose mind transcending the human? or, if we do so, to make our own Reason the analogical base for intellect of wider sweep? How is it possible to look along any line of light traced by past research, and, estimating the contents which it reveals, and leaves still unrevealed, to remember that along all radii to which we may turn, a similar infinitude presents itself to any faculty that seeks it, and yet to conceive that this mass of truth to be known has only our weak intelligence to know it? And if two natures know the same thing, how can they be other than like? Nay, Du Bois-Reymond himself takes up the magnificent fancy of Laplace, of a "mind cognizant of all forces operating in nature at a given moment, and all mutual relations among the beings composing it. Such a mind, if in other respects capacious enough to subject these data to analysis, would comprise in the same formula the movements of the greatest masses in the universe, and of the lightest atom. Nothing would be uncertain to him; and to his glance future and past would alike be present. The human understanding presents, in the perfection to which it has brought astronomy, a feeble image of such a mind."* Here is reproduced the very thought which, in his ignorance of differential equations, Plato expressed by saying that God was the supreme Geometer; simply taking to the summit-level the analogy which Laplace leaves floating at some indefinite height above the human. Is the conception, then, vitiated because it is "anthropomorphic"? Let Du Bois-Reymond answer: "Wir gleichen diesem Geist, den wir begreifen ihn."† If to have the

* "Ueber die Grenzen des Naturerkennens," p. 6.

† Ibid. p. 10.

idea of a diviner nature is to resemble him, and if resemblance must be reciprocal, what can be more futile than the reproach that men attribute to God what is highest in humanity?

It may be doubted, indeed, whether the analogy might not be pressed further, without overstraining its truth. If the collective energies of the universe are identified with Divine Will, and the system is thus animate with an eternal consciousness as its moulding life, the conception we frame of its history will conform itself to our experience of intellectual volition. Its course is ever from the indeterminate to the determinate; and as the passage is made by rational preference among possibilities, *thought* has its intensity at the outset, and *action* in the sequel. It is in origination, in disposing of new conditions, in setting up order by differentiation, that the mind exercises its highest function. When the product has been obtained, and a definite method of procedure established, the strain upon us is relaxed, habit relieves the constant demand for creation, and at length the rules of a practised art almost execute themselves. As the intensely voluntary thus works itself off into the automatic, thought, liberated from this reclaimed and settled province, breaks into new regions, and ascends to ever higher problems: its supreme life being beyond the conquered and legislated realm, while a lower consciousness, if any at all, suffices for the maintenance of its ordered mechanism. Yet all the while it is one and the same mind that, under different modes of activity, thinks the fresh thoughts and carries on the old usages. Does anything forbid us to conceive similarly of the cosmical development; that it started from the freedom of indefinite possibilities and the ubiquity of universal consciousness; that, as intellectual exclusions narrowed the field, and traced the definite lines of admitted movement, the tension of purpose, less needed on these, left them as the habits of the universe, and operated rather for higher and ever higher ends not yet provided for; that the more mechanical,

therefore, a natural law may be, the further is it from its source; and that the inorganic and unconscious portion of the world, instead of being the potentiality of the organic and conscious, is rather its residual precipitate, formed as the Indwelling Mind of all concentrates an intenser aim on the upper margin of the ordered whole, and especially on the inner life of natures that can resemble him? I am aware that this speculation inverts the order of the received cosmogonies. But, in advancing it, I only follow in the track of a veteran physiologist and philosopher, whose command of all the materials for judgment is beyond question,—the author of "Psychophysik." Fechner insists that protoplasm and zoophyte structure, instead of being the inchoate matter of organization, is the cast-off residuum of all previous differentiation, stopping short of the separation of animal from plant and of sex from sex, and no more capable of further development than is inorganic matter, without powers beyond its own, of producing organization.* And, far from admitting that the primordial periods had few organisms, which time increased in number, he contends that the earth was formerly more rich in organisms than now, and that the inorganic realm has grown at the expense of the organic.†

The resolution of all power into Will is met by the thorough-going objection, that Mind is not energy at all, and can never stir a particle of matter. "Were it possible," says Lange, "for a single cerebral atom to be moved by 'thought' so much as the millionth of a millimetre out of the path due to it by the laws of mechanics, the whole 'formula of the universe' (*i.e.*, as imagined by Laplace) would become inapplicable and senseless."‡ "Suppose," he adds, "two worlds, both occupied by men and their doings, with the same course of history, with the same

* "Einige Ideen zur Schöpfungs-und Entwickelungsgeschichte der Organismen," p. 73.

† Ibid. pp. 77, 78.

‡ "Geschichte des Materialismus," ii. p. 155.

modes of expression by gesture, the same sounds of voice, for him who could *hear* them—*i.e.*, could not simply have their vibrations conveyed through the auditory nerve to the brain, but be self-conscious of them. The two worlds are therefore to be absolutely alike, with only this difference: that in the one the whole mechanism runs down like that of an automaton, without anything being felt or thought, whilst the other is just *our* world; then would the formula for these two worlds be completely the same. To the eye of exact research they would be indistinguishable."*

So much the worse, are we not tempted to say, for "exact research"? If, with all its keenness and precision, it misses half the universe, and identifies diametrical opposites, it will be a calamity rather for it than for us, that its "formula" should prove less applicable than had been supposed. The extension to man, in an exaggerated form, of Descartes' doctrine of animal automatism marks, perhaps, the lowest point which the falling barometer of philosophy has reached. By him it was propounded for the express purpose of finishing off the mechanical modes of action, even when strained to their maximum, short of the human characteristics; and of opening in these a second and sharply contrasted world, containing another hemisphere of phenomena, with their own lines of causality and relations of affinity. Though by his absolute separation of matter and mind he cut the problem of the world in two, he at least embraced the whole of it, and attempted to solve it by a double formula. But his modern interpreters do not see why one half of his theory should not be stretched to do the work of the whole: they have only to ignore his unmechanical part of the world and leave it out in the cold, and in place of his contrast they will get an identity. For his maxims,—Movement is the cause of movement, Thought of thought, but neither of the other,—they substitute the rule, that Movement is the cause of both, but Thought of neither: so that there is no longer any counter-

* "Geschichte des Materialismus," ii. p. 156.

part to the mechanism of nature, or any work done beyond it; and whatever puffs of thought and screeches of feeling there may be, it is only that the engine is blowing off its steam: nothing comes of it, and it may be treated as waste. This theory is founded on the analysis of reflex action in the nervous apparatus, in which the sensory conductor having delivered its stimulus in the ganglion, the motory takes up the sequence and contracts the muscles requisite for action in response. If the brain be kept from interfering, the circuit is completed in unconsciousness; and its series, though determining the subject to all sorts of clever and congruous movements, is composed of molecular changes unattended by feeling or design. When the scene is transferred to the brain or connected with it, the story, we are assured, is still the same, only with the added phenomenon of consciousness. In the one case, the subject acts: in the other, he acts and knows it. But this new fact is inoperative, and leads to nothing: were it absent, he would figure away as a molecular automaton all the same, and not a scene or a word would be altered in the five-act comedy of life. Comparing in this view the reflex and the cerebral activities, we might say that the former resembles a clock with *one beat*—viz., movement only; the latter, a clock with *two beats*—viz., movement *plus* consciousness.

By the extent of this increment, the second does more work than the first. What, then, becomes of the difference? Where are we to look for it at its next stage? We are expressly told it has no next stage, and things will go on exactly as if it had not been there. Then a portion of work has perished, and the Conservation of energy is contradicted.

The only escape from this conclusion would be by denying that consciousness produced is "work done." This, however, is to admit that it is not an effect of molecular forces; to exempt it altogether from the range of physical law; and to throw it into an independent world of its own,

beyond the jurisdiction of the natural philosopher. Such a position would be an unconditional relapse into the two-armed embrace of Descartes, from which the whole doctrine is a struggle to escape.

It is said that if thought can move a single molecule, the law of causality is at an end. Why is it not equally at an end if, conversely, molecular movement can wake a single thought? Either way, causality alike steps out of the material series, and crosses over to the other, now last, now first. And only on the assumption that, being a monopoly of Physics, it cannot do this, has the objection any sense.

This doctrine, that the most important elements of life,—all that constitute experience, and embody themselves in language, art, religion,—are so much *surplusage*,—that the mental phenomena are collectively a *cul-de-sac*, leading nowhither,—comes with a singular irony from men who by force of intellect, knowledge, and character are in many ways changing the conceptions of their time, and whose most signal triumph it will be to convince us that, if they never felt or thought at all, or stirred emotion and idea in us, it would make no difference to our history, and the senseless pantomime of our life would fit into the same niche in the world's "formula." Such paradoxical triumphs are occasionally won by planting the old nightmare of necessity closely on our breast. But not for long: and the first of us that, feeling cold, spreads his hands before the fire, or, struck with grief, wrings them over the lifeless features of a friend, will here break the spell, and restore the faith that to be conscious, to think, to love, is to have power.

But then, it is said, this mental power, even if we concede it, is found only in connection with definite material conditions; in the absence of which, as in the structure of plants, we have no grounds for admitting any conscious life.

"What can you say then to the student of nature if, before

he allows a Psychical principle to the universe, he asks to be shown, somewhere within it, embedded in neurine and fed with warm arterial blood under proper pressure, a convolution of ganglionic globules and nerve-tubes proportioned in size to the faculties of such a Mind?"*

"What can we say?" I say, first of all, that this demand for a Divine brain and nerves and arteries comes strangely from those who reproach the Theist with "anthropomorphism." In order to believe in God, they must be assured that the plates in "Quain's Anatomy" truly represent him. If it be a disgrace to religion to take the human as measure of the divine, what place in the scale of honour can we assign to this stipulation? Next, I ask my questioner, whether he suspends belief in his friends' mental powers till he has made sure of the contents of their crania? and whether, in the case of ages beyond reach, there are no other adequate vestiges of intellectual and moral life in which he places a ready trust? *Immediate* knowledge of mind other than his own he can never have: its existence in other cases is gathered from the signs of its activity, whether in personal lineaments or in products stamped with thought: and to stop this process of inference with the discovery of *human* beings, is altogether arbitrary, till it is shown that the grounds for extending it are inadequate. Further, I would submit that, in dealing with the problem of the Universal Mind, this demand for organic centralization is strangely inappropriate. It is when mental power has to be localized, bounded, lent out to individual natures and assigned to a scene of definite relations, that a focus must be found for it and a molecular structure with determinate periphery be built for its lodgment. And were Du Bois-Reymond himself ever to alight on the portentous cerebrum which he imagines, I greatly doubt whether he would fulfil his promise and turn Theist at the sight: that he had found the Cause of causes would

* Du Bois-Reymond, "Ueber die Grenzen des Naturerkennens," p. 37.

be the last inference it would occur to him to draw: rather would he look round for some monstrous *creature*, some cosmic megatherium, born to float and pasture on the fields of space. The great "energies" which we recognize as modes of the Universal Power are not central but ubiquitous: gravitation reports itself wherever there is a particle of matter; heat and light spread with the ether whose undulations they are; and electricity, at one moment gathered into poles, at another sweeps in the aurora over half the heavens. But if still my questioner cannot dispense with some visible structure as the organ of the Ever-living Mind, I will ask him, in his conception of the brain, to take into account these words of Cauchy's:—

"Ampère has shown . . . that the molecules of different bodies may be regarded as composed each of several atoms, the dimensions of which are infinitely small relatively to their separating distances. If then we could see the constituent molecules of the different bodies brought under our notice, they would present to our view sorts of constellations; and in passing from the infinitely great to the infinitely small, we should find, in the ultimate particles of matter, as in the immensity of the heavens, central points of action distributed in presence of each other."*

If then the invisible molecular structure and movement do but repeat in little those of the heavens, what hinders us from inverting the analogy, and saying that the ordered heavens repeat the rhythm of the cerebral particles? You need an embodied mind? Lift up your eyes, and look upon the arch of night as the brow of the Eternal, its constellations as the molecules of the universal consciousness, its space as their possibility of change, and the ethereal waves as the afferents and efferents of Omniscient Thought. Even in the human nerves, the solid lines are but conductors, and the granules but media of movement; and science

* Cited from "Moigno's Cosmos," tom. ii. p. 374, by Fechner: Atomenlehre, xxvi. p. 232.

is ever on the search for some subtler essence that is thus sheathed and transmitted. In the cosmos, then, think of that essence as unsheathed and omnipresent, with light for its messenger and space for its scope of perception, and your material requisition is not wholly a dream.

Quite in the sense of Du Bois-Reymond's objection was the saying of Laplace, that in scanning the whole heaven with the telescope he found no God; which again has its parallel in Lawrence's remark that the scalpel, in opening the brain, came upon no soul.* Both are unquestionably true, and it is precisely the truth of the second which vitiates the intended inference from the first. Had the scalpel alighted on some perceptible ψυχή, we might have required of the telescope to do the same; and, on its bringing in a dumb report, have concluded that there was only mechanism there. But, in spite of the knife's failure, we positively know that conscious thought and will were present, yet no more visible, yesterday: and so, that the telescope misses all but the bodies of the universe and their light, avails nothing to prove the absence of a Living Mind through all. If you take the wrong instruments, such quæsita may well evade you. The test-tube will not detect an insincerity, or the microscope analyse a grief. The organism of nature, like that of the brain, lies open, in its external features, to the scrutiny of science; but, on the inner side, the life of both is reserved for other modes of apprehension, of which the base is self-consciousness and the crown is religion.

The contempt or sorrow with which the claim of *design* is struck out from the interpretation of the world, results in like manner from a false start in construing the dynamic idea. We are supposed to have made acquaintance, in the laboratory, the botanic garden, the aquarium, and among

* Both these dicta I quote from memory, without at the moment being able to verify the citations. An equivalent passage to the latter occurs in the "Lectures on Physiology, Zoology, and the Natural History of Man," p. 8, 1819.

the stars, with a set of blind forces, to which a happy hit and a stupid blunder are indifferent and possible, alike; and then, by way of supplement to these, to introduce into the thus prepared scene the action of intellectual purpose. The former is treated as the sphere of determinate causality; the latter, of teleological government. It is plain that, under these conditions, nothing is left to the second agency except the residue unexplained by the first; nor does anything suit its character except the fitnesses which (*inter alia*) are not impossible to the other also. Unless, therefore, it invades and interrupts the series otherwise inevitable, it is liable to be deposed and "mediatized" by advancing knowledge; its troop of anomalies filing off by degrees into the drilled army of necessity; and the adaptations it had claimed being traced to the forces which cannot think. With these logical preconceptions, it is no wonder that the naturalist directs a professional enmity against the doctrine of design, and meets it as the opponent he is for ever beating back: and as he is certainly not only in his right, but at his duty, in pushing to the utmost his researches into the physical history of the forms and phenomena he studies, it is a venial impatience with which he resents attempts to stop him by "supernatural phantoms" across his path. If he can display the mechanism by which the heliotrope turns to the sun, or the chemistry by which in a few hours the turbot assumes the colour of the ground over which it swims, or tell the whole story which, beginning with a jelly-point tingling in the sunshine, ends with the completed human eye, let his work have all sympathy and honour. But if he imagines that he is displacing Thought from nature by discovering causality, he is the subject of the very same illusion which would cry him down and arrest his course. The cases do but present the two sides of one superstition.

The dispute between acting Force and intending Mind is as unmeaning as the quarrel of a man with his own image. The two are identical,—expressions, now in all

dimensions, now in some, of the same nature. Causal power other than Will being an unknown quantity, nay, absolutely out of the sphere of thought, teleology and causality are incorporated in one; and mechanical necessity, instead of being the negation of purpose, is its persistence, —the declining, no doubt, of this or that possible diversion to minor ends, but in subservience to the stability of a more comprehensive order. The inexorability of nature is but the faithfulness of God, the maintenance of those unswerving habits in the universe, without which it could train no mind and school no character: and that it is hard and unbending to us does not prevent its being fluid to Him. To affirm *purpose*, therefore, in the adjustments of the world, is not to set up a rival principle outside their producing force, but to plant, or rather to leave, an integrating thought within it. And, conversely, to trace those adjustments to their "physical causes," is not to withdraw them from their ideal origin, but only to detect the method of carrying the inner meaning to its realization. Who will venture to say, what nevertheless is constantly imagined, that to find how a change comes about is to prove that it was never contemplated? If it *were* contemplated, it would have to be executed *somehow*; if, the moment you read the machinery provided for this purpose, the purpose itself is quenched from your view, is this the discovery or the loss of a reality?

This treatment of determinate causation as incompatible with conscious aims is the more curious, as proceeding from a school which, as necessarian, is constantly labouring to show the co-existence of the two in human nature. If man is only a sample of the universal determinism, yet forms purposes, contrives for their accomplishment, and executes them, definite causality and prospective thought can work together, and the field which is occupied by the one is not pre-occupied against the other.

The frequent plea "See, there is no mind here, for all is necessary causation," tacitly concedes that, in order to have

mind, there must be exemption from necessity; and can be consistently urged only by one who attributes this exemption to the human will. Is the argument conclusive from his point of view? It would be so, were it possible to prove his premiss, viz., the universality, in the cosmos, of necessary causation. But this is plainly out of the question, because his amplest science carries the induction, such as it is, only skin-deep into the universe; because he would have to show that the present fixity was not determined by a past exercise of will; because Mind, in proportion as it is orderly and exact in its methods, may assume the semblance of necessity, and be the less suspected that its freedom works by rule. He knows how he himself, though conscious of self-disposal as well as of subjection to nature, presents to the determinist the aspect of a machine; and how can he be secure against a similar illusion in his interpretation of the world? What is to prevent the same combination of free and necessary causality which he finds in himself from existing also beyond? Nay, if there were only mind-excluding force in nature, how could there arise a force-resisting mind in him? He could not carry in himself new causal beginnings, if in the cosmos whence he comes the lines of possibility were definitely closed.

I revert, then, after weighing these objections, to my "unwiderstehlicher Hang zur Personification," and persist in regarding that which the natural philosopher calls *force*, and Professor Tyndall raises to an immanent *life*, as Causal Will, manifesting itself, not in interference with an established order, but in producing it. As it builds and weaves and quickens all matter, and could not otherwise work before us at all, the structures and growths of the material world are its seat, and their phenomena its witnesses: so that the very story,—of saline crystals, and ice-stars, and fern-fronds, and human birth,—which Professor Tyndall tells in order to exclude it, is to me a continuous report of its agency and laws. He asks, what else is there here than matter? I answer, the *movements* of matter, with their

disposing and "formative *power*," the attracting and repelling energies, which, *dealing with* molecules and cells, *are not* molecules and cells. "Mens agitat molem." Whoever finds this incredible, will soon have to make friends with some abstraction which is but a ghastly mimicry of it; for *some* conception over and above that of "pure matter," is indispensable to the accurate representation of the simplest facts. If in the typical "oak-tree" the vitality suddenly ceased, the "matter" of it would at the next moment still be there, as certainly as that of a clock which had run down: it would weigh the same as before, and so stand the admitted test of the indestructibility of matter. Yet *something* is gone which was previously there, and that something has to be described otherwise than in terms of "matter." The droll "hypothesis" which my critic amuses himself with conjecturally attributing to me, "of a vegetative soul," wedded to the tree at a definite date, and quitting it when its term was up, certainly does not help us; and is set up on my behalf, I presume, simply from the facility of knocking it down. But are we any better served by the "alternative" conception of a "formative power," long latent and "potential," *i.e.*, *not* forming anything, but only *going to do so*? I see that the conception contradicts Büchner's dictum, "A power not expressing itself has no existence"; yet am at a loss to know how, during its latency, its presence is ascertained, and to exercise with regard to it "that Vorstellungs-fähigkeit with which, in my efforts to think clearly, I can never dispense." Whilst it lies in wait behind the scenes,—before the time for the deposit of the crystal or the germination of the acorn,—*where* is it? behind what molecules does it hide? through what space is it invisibly present? What shape has it, enabling it to lay its building particles and to agglutinate cells? How does it know the right moment of temperature for stepping on to the stage, and declaring itself without further reserve? In short, all the questions addressed to me respecting the "formative soul" invented for me, I

refer back to be answered on behalf of my critic's "potential power." "Potentiality" is an intelligible fact in a being consciously able to act or to refrain. But when the idea is carried into a system of necessitated phenomena, it means nothing in *them*, but something in *us*, as their observers—viz., that we conditionally anticipate a future change, foreseeing a distant term of a series which would be certain, provided the nearer ones were not obscure. To plant this subjective suspense out into the field of nature to do objective work there, now alighting visibly upon the earth, and then hidden again in "an ambrosial cloud," is a sort of intellectual illusion which modern logic might have been expected to cast out.

In truth, the nearer I approach the Power which Professor Tyndall pursues through nature with so subtle and brilliant a chase, and the more I try, by combining the predicates which he gives and withholds, to think it out into the clear, the less distinct does this "ideal somewhat" become, not simply to the imagination, but to intellectual apprehension. A power which is not Mind, yet may be "potential" and exist when and where it makes no sign; which is "immanent" in matter, yet *is* matter; which "is manifested in the universe," yet is not "a Cause," therefore has no effects; presents to me, I must confess, not an overshadowing mystery, but an assemblage of contradictions. I have always supposed that "Power" was a relative word, and that the correlative was found in the "work done": take away the latter by denying the causation, and the term drops into five letters which might as well be arranged in any other order.

Yet elsewhere this negative language is balanced by such large affirmative suggestions that I almost cease to feel the interval between my critic's thought and my own. Of the inorganic, the vegetable, and the animal realms, he says:—

"From this point of view all three worlds would constitute a unity, in which I picture life as immanent everywhere. Nor

am I anxious to shut out the idea that the life here spoken of may be but a subordinate part and function of a higher life, as the living, moving blood is subordinate to the living man. I resist no such idea, as long as it is not dogmatically imposed. Left for the human mind freely to operate upon, the idea has ethical vitality; but stiffened into a dogma, the inner force disappears, and the outward yoke of a usurping hierarchy takes its place."*

Bidding God-speed to this sudden flank-attack upon usurping hierarchies and dogmas, I pursue only the main line of march in the free "idea." Whither does it lead me? It shows me the three provinces which make up our cosmos blended into one organism by an all-pervading life, which conducts all their processes, from the flow of the river to the dynamics of the human brain. This alone brings me to a pause of solemn wonder,—a single power through the whole, and that a living one! But there is more behind. This power, co-extensive though it is with nature, is not all: beyond her level we are to think of a "higher life," to which her laws and history do but give functional expression. May we then really think out this "idea" of a life "higher" than what is supreme in the world,—higher, therefore, than the human? But scale of height above that point we do not possess, except in gradation of intellectual and moral sublimity; and either that Ideal Life must cease to live, or must come before our thought as transcendent Mind and Will, on a scale comprehending as well as permeating the universe. With any guide who brings me hither I sit down with joy and rest. It is the mountain-top, which shows all things in larger relations and through a more lustrous air; and every feature,—the great build of the world close at hand; the thinning of the everlasting snows, as they stoop and melt towards human life; the opening of sweet valleys below the earlier and wilder pines; and the final plains, teeming in their silence with industry and thought,—is better understood than from

* *Fortnightly Review*, November, 1875, p. 596.

level points of view, where the scope is narrowed or the calm is lost. But my guide seems less content than I to rest here, and deserts me, not, so far as I can trace him, to reach a brighter point, but rather to descend into the mists. To the "higher life," transcending our highest, he dares not give the predicate "Mind," or apply the pronoun of Personality.* On *what* scale, then, is it "higher"? If not on the intellectual and moral, then there is that in man which rises above it; for the power of attaining truth and goodness is ideally supreme. If Professor Tyndall can reveal to us something which is higher than Mind and Free Causality, by all means let us accept it at his hands and assign it to God. But in order to profess this, and therefore to deprecate as an "anthropomorphism" the ascription of mind to Him, one would have, I think, to be one's self something *more than man.* Only such a one could cast a look above the level of Reason, to see whether it was overtopped: and so, this fashionable reproach against religion is virtually an arrogating of a superhuman position. As we cannot overfly our own zone, no beat of our wings availing to lift us out of the atmosphere they press, surely, if that "higher life" speaks to us in idea at all, it can only be as Perfect Reason and Righteous Will. Those who find this type of conception not good enough for them,—do they succeed in struggling upwards to a better? Rather, I should fear, does a persistent gravitation gain upon them, till they droop and sink into the alternative faith of blind force which leaves their own rank supreme.

Professor Tyndall sets the belief in "unbroken causal connection" and the "theologic conception" over against each other as "rivals"; and says that an hour's reasoning will give the first the victory.† The victory is impossible, because the rivalry is unreal. Why should not a Mind of

* *Fortnightly Review*, November, 1875, p. 596.

† Ibid.

illimitable resources,—such as "the theologic conception" enthrones in the universe,—conduct and maintain "unbroken causal connection"? Is not such connection congenial with the relations of thought and the harmony of intellectual life? Do not you, the student of nature, yourself admire it? Is it not the theme of your constant praise? Do you not speak with contemptuous aversion of alleged deviations from the steadfast tracks of order? and would you not yourself maintain those tracks, if you were at the head of things? To this attitude you are impelled by a just jealousy for the coherent beauty and worth of science as a whole. If, then, these unswerving lines so dignify the investigating intellect which regressively traces them up, how can it be out of character with the Mind of minds to think them progressively forth?

In the discussion which here reaches its close, my object has been simply defensive,—to repel the pretension of speculative materialism to supersede "the theological conception," by tracing that pretension to an imperfect appreciation of the ultimate logic of science. But the idea of Divine Causality which is thus saved, though an essential condition, is not the chief strength of religion; giving perhaps its measure in breadth, but not in depth. Were the physical aspects of the world alone open to us, we should doubtless gain, by reading a divineness between the lines, for beauty a new meaning, for poetry a fuller music, for art a greater elevation; but hardly a better balance of the affections or more fidelity of will. It is not till we cross the chasm which stops the scientific continuity, not till we make a new beginning on the further side, that the "idea of a higher life," emerging now in a far different field, can claim its "ethical value." The *self-conscious* hemisphere of inner experience,—which natural philosophy leaves in the dark,—*this* it is which turns to its Divine Source; and finds, not in any vacant "mystery," but in the living sympathy of a supreme Perfection, "the lifting power of an

ideal element in human life." Only by converse with our own minds can we,—to use the words of Smith of Cambridge,—"steal from them their secrets," and "climb up to the contemplation of the Deity." * It is but too natural that this inner side of knowledge, this *melior pars nostri*, should be unheeded by those who look on it as the mere accessory fringe of an automatic life, gracefully hanging from the texture, but without a thread of connection beyond; and that with them the word "subjective" should be tantamount to "groundless." They confess the "mystery" of this interior experience only to fly from it and refuse its light. Yet here it is that at last light and vision lapse into one, and supply the ἡλιοειδέστατον τῶν ὀργάνων† for the apprehension of the first truths of physical and the last of hyperphysical knowledge. Till we accept the "*faiths*" which our faculties postulate, we can never *know* even the sensible world; and when we accept them, we shall know much more. Short of this firm trust in the bases whereon our nature is appointed to stand,—a trust which, if destroyed by a half-philosophy, must be restored by a whole one,—the grandest "ideas" flung out to play with and turn about in the kaleidoscope of possibilities, or work up as material of poetry and rhetoric, can no more "lift" a human will than the gossamer pluck up the oak on which it swings. Unless your "ideal" reveals the real, it has no power, and its "ethic value" is that of a dissolving image or a passing sigh. You must "*believe*," ere you can "remove mountains:" if you only fancy, they sit as a nightmare on your breast. And if man does nothing well, till he ceases to have his vision, and his vision rather has him and wields him for action or repose; and if then he astonishes you with his triumphs over "nature" and her apparent real, is he the *only* being who thus rides out upon a thought, and

* Discourse iii. p. 66, ap. "Tulloch's Rational Theology," vol. ii. p. 158.

† Plato de Rep. 508, A.

makes the elements embody it? Have not these elements already learned their obedience, and grown familiar with the intellectual mandate to which they yield? A man truly possessed, ethically moulded by the pressures of reverence and love, you can never persuade that the beauty, the truth, the goodness which kindles him is but his private altar-lamp: it is an eternal, illimitable light, pervading and consecrating the universe. Unless it be so, it fires him no more: and, instead of utterly surrendering his will to it in trust and sacrifice, he begins to admire it as a little mimic star of his own,—a phosphorescence of matter set up by the chemistry of nature, not to see things by, but to glisten on the darkness of himself. It is vain to expatiate on the need of religion for our nature, and on the elevation of character which it can produce, and in the same breath bid it begone from the home of truth and seek shelter in the tent of romance. If its power is noble, its essence is true. And what that essence comprises has been worked fairly out in the long experiment of Christianity on human nature; which has shown that, in its purest and strongest phase, religion is a variety and last sublimity of *personal affection* and living communion with an Infinitely Wise and Good and Holy. The expectation that anything will remain if this be dropped, and that by flinging the same sacred vestments of speech round the form of some empty abstraction you can save the continuity of piety, is an illusion which could never occur except to the outside observer. Look at the sacred poetry and recorded devotion of Christendom: how many lines of it would have any meaning left, if the conditions of conscious relationship and immediate converse between the human and the Divine Mind were withdrawn? And wherever the sense of these conditions has been enfeebled, through superficial "rationalism" or ethical self-confidence, "religious sterility" has followed. To its inner essence, thus tested by positive and negative experience, Religion will remain constant, taking little notice

of either scientific forbearance or critical management; and, though left, perhaps, by temporary desertions to nourish its life in comparative silence and retirement, certain to be heard, when it emerges, still speaking in the same simple tones, and breathing the old affections of personal love, and trust, and aspiration.

XI.

IDEAL SUBSTITUTES FOR GOD.

"THEOLOGY," after ranking for many centuries as the noblest branch of human learning, and even receiving homage "as the Queen of Sciences," has at last fallen upon an age which not only disputes its traditional pre-eminence, but would send it, discrowned and outlawed, into irreversible banishment. In order to judge aright between the old estimate of it and the new, we must look at its supposed contents, and consider what *Theology essentially is.* The word itself, belonging as it does to a well-known group of compounds, indicates its own central conception. As Geology is the methodical knowledge of the earth's crust,—Physiology, of living organisms,—Psychology, of the self-conscious mind,—Ethnology, of the races of mankind,—so is Theology the doctrine or rational apprehension of *God.* He is its object; and those who teach it assume that our faculties can take cognizance of Him, no less than the Cosmologist assumes that he can intelligently construe the variety and unity of the world. The *methods* of seeking Him have indeed changed with the genius of the thinker and the temper of his age. But whether he has proceeded (with Descartes) from the Idea to the infinite Reality, or (with Wolff) from the contingency of the universe to its necessary Source, or (with Paley) from the skill and beauty of nature to its intellectual Inventor, or

* Opening of Session, Manchester New College, London, October, 1879.

(with Kant) from the moral law to its righteous Legislator, or (with Chalmers) from the records of past revelations to the character of the Revealer,—in every instance the light from afar which has sustained the inquirer's zeal has been still the same,—the assured *Divine knowledge* in which the toil shall end. This is the inspiration of Theology; and if that living breath departs, it collapses and dies.

By watching the gradual change in the choice and complexion of words, we gain a kind of Nilometer, which shows the shifting levels and gathering floods of thought, and warns us of the season's work. And it is not without significance that, in place of what used to be called the study of *Theology*, we now more often hear of the "Science of *Religions*," *i.e.*, the systematic knowledge of what *men have believed and felt* on things sacred to them. The difference is obvious: it drops us down from a Divine to a Human object, from the yearning of Reason after its transcendent Reality to the history and critique of ethnic mythologies. As an element in the study of man, rich in psychological instruction, there is every ground for welcoming the new expansion recently given to this order of inquiries, and for rendering all honour to the leaders who open the way through them. And the treatment of them in the pure historical spirit, unperverted by theoretic preconceptions or apologetic interests, places them for the first time in their true position: for, as long as ancient and foreign religions had no reporter but the Christian theologian, it was vain to expect for them a sympathy adequate to their interpretation. Still, the importance of these studies is wholly anthropological. They tell the grotesque and pathetic story of our struggling race,—the dreams of its darkness, the guesses of its wonder, the surmises of its sin; but supply no selective rule for saving the true while pitying the false, and yield no Divine knowledge but what we bring to them. If, in pursuing them, we are already and independently furnished with our theology, they will reflect perhaps some rays of it here

and there, and so adorn it with a fresh illustration; but, in themselves, they will merely pass before us strange forms of thought, on which we gaze as from an outside station, and which we treat only as phenomena of the world. They cannot therefore claim the place of the old "Theology."

Whence this change in the aspect and method of religious theory? Why has it parted with its Infinite Object, and taken up instead with men's poor fancies about it? Can the broken lights of primeval superstitions render a truer image of things Divine than immediate intellectual vision? Have we really come to that last resort of superannuated philosophy, an eclectic commonplace-book of favourite beliefs? No doubt the reason is, that our age finds it easier to feel sure of what Religion *is* in man, than of what it *says* of God; and can treat it therefore with tenderness and respect as a subjective phenomenon, but hesitates to follow its daring launch-out on the ocean of real being. Its power as an element of character, as an inspiration in art, as a federator of nations and factor of history, is freely admitted; and no place that it can fairly claim in the genesis of society and the regulation of life, is denied to it. But that it knows its own meaning, and that that meaning is true; that what it sees is really there and no phantasm of the mind; that, when its mythical drapery is stripped off, anything substantive remains within;—on all this our generation, dazzled by its discoveries and deserted by its simplicity, feels bewildered and insecure. Yet we are naturally averse to supposing that mere emptiness and illusion can have a dominant influence in the education of mankind: so we try to find some solid little nucleus secreted at the centre of this brilliant nebula, and to make out that, if *we* could not lodge there now, it has belonged, or is going to belong, to some less erratic and more habitable world; and we insist that, though in itself it cannot pretend to much reality, it may symbolically stand for a good deal, if we do but construe it aright. We readily per-

ceive that the higher forms of Religion assume (*inter alia*) some rule of human experience, *e.g.*, that *the wicked lay snares for themselves ;* or some attitude of the moral consciousness, *e.g.*, the felt *transcendency of duty over performance ;* and, seizing upon these included postulates, we say,—" Here is the key : this is the whole story : we have got it now in the plain demotic character ; and the hieroglyphics may be rubbed out." What is the result ? Much, I think, what we should expect, where the text is disparaged to glorify the interpreter : its thought is twisted into a mask, through which *his* eyes look out ; and under the guise of ancient sage or prophet, we are confronted by the commonplaces of to-day. Isaiah turns out to be a Martin Tupper.

Of this rationalistic reduction of religion to formulas of experience there are so many examples now-a-days as to indicate a general tendency of our time. Amid their varieties there is one cry in which all their voices concur. It is raised in Holland, but echoed everywhere. " No Metaphysics !"—which means, taken in the foreign sense of the word, " No inquiry into any *Real Being* beyond the phenomena of the world : that is a problem which, whether admitting of solution or not, is indifferent to the spiritual life of humanity : either way, Religion remains a personal and social fact, the contents and significance of which we may examine." In other words, " It is nothing to Religion whether or not there be a God ! We may give theology its discharge and let it carry off all its beliefs, without prejudice to human trust and piety ; these have ample support from the laws of our nature and the order amid which we are placed, without seeking any deeper base." It is no wonder that when this one common element of all known religions (for even Buddhism does not answer to the demand, " No Metaphysics !") is removed, very divergent accounts should be given of what the residuary essence really is. In *this* indeed they do agree ;—that *Morality*, as next of kin to Religion, must succeed to its inheritance

and take its name; only, as they have hitherto existed both together on domains by no means co-extensive and with followers far from identical, it is necessary, if the world is to feel no bereavement to devise some transformation for morality,—to give it a step of preferment from the temporal to the spiritual peerage, and decorate it with the ostensible symbols of sanctity. The delicate question is, what these shall be. What shall we do to morality in order to turn it into religion? "Touch it with emotion," says Mr. Matthew Arnold, and "fix its eye on the *stream of tendency* as that continuous *not-ourselves* which makes for Righteousness." Mr. Frederick Harrison has no objection to the "emotion"; but prefers, as a Supreme Being, the idea of *collective Humanity* which claims the individual's service and weaves it into its texture for ever. The newest philosophy of Holland deems it enough that the morality shall be *ideal;* not the prosaic will of duty that toils under the burden and heat of the day, but the free flight towards visionary perfection to which midnight contemplation invites. Religion, we are assured, is "Moral Idealism." * In this definition the modern tendency finds perhaps its most exact expression; and in the following comments upon the general doctrine, its terms will be prevailingly in my thoughts.

Let it be admitted at the outset that, *within the limits of Ethics,*—if that were all the ground they claimed,—each of these teachers emphasizes an important truth. That on this scene of our life the course of things "makes for righteousness,"—that in "the stream of tendency" the defiling contents gradually subside and leave the waters purer as they flow,—that history, through all its tragedies, contains the promise of Right,—and that a firm trust in this ascending future is an indispensable support for human culture,—is a lesson so momentous, that his appreciation

* See the discussion on "Godsdienst zonder metaphysica" and on the "Zedelijk Ideaal," in the Theologisch Tijdschrift, 1874-5-6, by Hooykaas, Van Bell, Hugenholtz, Van Hamel, Kuenen, and others.

of it may well place Mr. Arnold high among moralists, if only it is not used as his passport of entrance among the prophets. So, again, nothing can be more seasonable than the counterpoise by which Mr. Harrison checks the sophistical egoism of the preceding English philosophers. In proof of their dictum that Pleasure is the ultimate good and the end of all action, they have usually put the case of a solitary person set up in an empty universe, and insisted that if, on arising, he had one pleasant sensation and then passed away, it would have been worth his while to exist; but if the sensation were painful, he had better not have been; so that there is nothing eligible but pleasure. The absurdity of the argument lies in its quiet assumption (under the conception of loneliness) of Individualism, and its reduction of life to mere sentiency. This creature floating in vacancy is, by hypothesis, out of relation to anything but himself: all objects, all companions, are kept out of his way: there is nothing for him to go to or to act upon: he is a self-concentrated focus, surrendered to *passivity*, which has only a sensitive value. On these terms he is not a *man at all;* nor even so much as a sponge in the sea, which at least *does something* with the water around it. The human being is first constituted by precisely the system of relations which are all here omitted: we are what we are by reciprocation: the *individual* is not the factor, but the *product*, of society; and, to understand our nature, we must reckon with humanity first as a collective and dominant organism, whence he starts forth and differentiates himself. This independence and ascendency of the altruistic relations, with the reverent self-subordination which they enjoin to the abiding and growing life of society, are vindicated with a just enthusiasm by our eloquent Positivist;—with an effect, however, which might have been greater, had not his afflatus carried him over from philosophy to allegory, and mystified his doctrine by expressing it in terms of "the Soul and the Future Life." A still deeper truth it is

which has led the extreme school in Holland to resolve religion into "Moral Idealism." They have certainly hit upon the very experience which occupies the border-ground between ethics and faith, and carries the conscience over from rules of life to inward worship. On the one hand, do I not know that, in every alternative offered to my choice, I can both see the higher course and take it, and am solemnly bound to take no other? On the other hand, do I not also know, from the sad lessons of the past, that I shall not persistently do so; and that the will *always* pure and unselfish, just and true, though for ever possible, will be for ever unrealized? This conflict between character and conception is doubtless the cradle of religion: the interval between what we are and what we are guilty for not being, is that which turns our look upwards, to see if there be hope beyond these shadows of reproach, and which makes the heart low and tender to yield to any heavenly promise that may descend. The spirit that has set into this attitude, and, in the daily round of duty, is secretly drawn on by an infinite aspiration, already waits at the gate of heaven.

But it is one thing to be brought to the verge of Religion by sympathy with this or that part of its contents; it is another, to penetrate to its interior essence. And inasmuch as it is the aim of all those interpreters to retain the pieties of human character, while excusing themselves and us from any conscious relations with *the Living God*, I submit that they attempt what is impossible, and that the very life of Religion centres precisely in that which they discard. They feel the elevation and beauty of the best type of spiritual growth, but would fain dispense with its secret aliment and conditions. They look with wonder at the stately stem, as it springs aloft: they love the shade of the foliage: they admire the blossom;—but they cut the root. It is a repetition at a higher level, of the mistake which the Individualists commit. These try to make a whole of the single person, and from his nature, measured

in itself, to deduce a theory of his existence, though that existence is entirely made up of a tissue of relations with his kind and his theatre of being. Humanism corrects this error; yet again renews it, when it shuts up *mankind* within their reciprocal relations, and cuts them off from diviner affinities beyond. Neither ourselves, nor our race, surveyed as an island, can ever be interpreted aright: to understand what we are, and even what we contain, we must venture the embracing seas and integrate our lives with the unmeasured sphere of being.

Do I then restrict the conception of Religion to the sentiments awakened by the presence of *Infinite* Perfection, and say that, short of this point, its characteristic spirit fails? On the contrary, I trace its secret power in all human relations where affection and duty are concerned. Reverence for character above us, at whatever height it may be, is the posture of a *religious* nature; and the aspiration it sustains, the trust it fosters, the self-sacrifice it renders possible and light, fling into our life its fairest colours and tincture it all with sacredness. Let this devoutness of heart be free as you will: let it go everywhere and touch everything: the finite also is open to it as well as the infinite; and the minor pieties are not to retire or renounce their name before the greater. But then, for both there is this indispensable condition; viz., that the inward homage, whatever its direction, shall alight upon a *real object*, and not lose itself in the dilution of an endless search. When I am awed and subdued before the grace and grandeur of a moral superior, it is not because he *suggests*, but because he *realizes*, a higher conception of excellence: it is as a living agent, as a personal embodiment, of righteousness, that he wields authority over my conscience. Take away this element, tear the picture out of the volume of true history and cast it to the transient winds of imagination, and all is immediately changed. The image remaining the same, I may still admire; but no longer in grave silence,—rather with outspoken praise: of

my compunction I am relieved: the strength of resolution is relaxed: the "lifting power" of a devout enthusiasm is gone; and if I have gained any new variety of thought, it is simply added to my culture, but does not transform my life. A conception which reports itself as empty of reality, even if it startles us into a momentary awe, can no more receive our reverent embrace than the shade of a departed ancestor or guide:

> Frustra comprensa manus effugit imago,
> Par levibus ventis, volucrique simillima somno.

There is nothing to sustain the worshipful influence of its presence: we cannot venerate our own idea. *Here* it is that "Moral Idealism" falls short of the conditions of Religion; not because it is ethical, while religion is something else; not because it works among finite relations, while religion is concerned only with the infinite; but because its ideal perfection is known to be only in our heads, while the ideal of religion must be also real. Strauss himself makes the memorable confession, that "none but a book-student could ever imagine that a creation of the brain, woven of poetry and philosophy, can take the place of real Religion."*

To mark then the step of thought that crosses the line into the hemisphere of Religion:—it is made when we affirm that over us and in relation to us the All-perfect Mind *exists*. Devout faith is a belief of *real Being* on the strength of *what ought to be*. If you look at it from the outside, you may call it the apotheosis of moral aspiration: if you name it from the interior, you will say it is the revelation of God in the conscience. The former expression describes the ascent of my thought to its object; the latter, the descent of its object into my thought. As my purpose is at present only to clear the meaning and scope of words which are made mischievous by indeterminate

* Kaiser Julien; der Romantiker auf dem Throne der Cäsaren, S. 12.

use, I will not pause to vindicate the drawing of an ontological conclusion from a moral premiss. It is not the only paradox of reason into which we are irresistibly borne away by that wonderful conception of what *ought to be.* It introduces many convictions against which the logic of physical science is for ever chafing; but which take no notice of the rebuff, and continue to be bases of social law and the invisible bonds of human life. To these criticisms, if time permits, I will devote a few words before I close. Just now I rest on the position that "Moral Idealism" is not Religion, unless the ideal is held to be *Real* as well as *Divine.*

To test this position, suppose the element of *Reality* to be now admitted, and now removed; and compare the natural working of the moral ideal under the two conditions, to see whether in both instances alike it is marked by the effects which experience shows to be characteristic of religion.

Ever since the Epistle to the Romans was written, it has become a Christian commonplace that, in all moral experience, I am divided against myself; inwardly identified with a superior call that beckons me; outwardly liable to take my lot with the inferior inclination that clings to me. In such conflict, whatever be its issue, the *real* self is always that which votes for the good; conformably with Plato's rule, that no man, *of his own will* (though, possibly, of blind impulse), ever decides for the worse. If I choose aright, the previous strife is laid to rest, and my nature is at one with itself and its own ends. If I choose amiss, the storm within is fiercer than before; I rage against my own temptation; and if the fact be known, I am ashamed to walk abroad and carry about so false an image of myself. And thus it is with all men, so far as the moral life has developed its history in them. Set before them a just and righteous claim that demands them, and, if only you get the conception clear into their hearts, they are caught up into one spirit at the appeal, and muster as an army fresh

from sleep. They feel, perhaps for the first time, that they are themselves,—that they never knew themselves before. They have emerged from a disguising cloud, and beneath the sunshine their very essence has found them out. With all of us, then, in some deep sense, the ideal self is the truly Real; and we disown as foreign whatever contradicts it.

Yet, in another sense, it is just this which is *unreal;* for it is never *realized:* it is something still *to be*, which not yet *is*. If you ask for the *actual* self, now and here, to-day and to-morrow, of each individual, it will be precisely that which he repudiates as the false one; wherein the struggle is *not over*, the temptation not banished, the unity not attained. Unless therefore fact itself is illusion, this other and relatively *evil* self is that which *really is*, both in each of us and in society. Yet, strange to say, it encounters a fate which befalls no other fact. Its right *to be a phenomenon* is disputed. Real as it is, it is *condemned for being there*, and has to skulk before an eternal protest, which treats it as *marring reality*, and bids it take itself away.

What meaning then is to be put upon these two aspects of Reality, leading us at once to affirm and to deny it of the same object? To the Theist, the paradox easily resolves itself. That the moral consciousness on the one hand, and observation of fact on the other, should give two measures of reality, does not surprise him. He sees in them only reflections in little of two corresponding functions of the universe at large,—viz., indwelling thought, ideal purpose, free creativeness, determining it towards all beauty and good; and finite material conditions for the externalization and progressive expression of its spiritual origin and end: *i.e.*, *Mind*, eternally perfect; and *Nature*, perfectible by transition,—the one for ever *being*, the other only *becoming* (therefore partly *not* being) what it *ought to be*. Where the great whole consists of this permanent essence of reality and its partial negation, it is intelligible that both should

report themselves in our derivative nature, and in their very lineaments claim their respective parentage, and by their native sympathies tend towards their home. In such a world there is no uncertain meaning in that consciousness of a *higher* that possesses me,—that sense of *authority* which every opening of duty brings,—that almost speaking appeal to my will that tells me, "This alone is right, and thou canst do it,"—that terrible conviction incurred by all wrong-doing, that I have lost *myself* and become alienated from an infinitely better than myself. These experiences necessarily belong to the relation between the opening conscience of an incipiently free humanity and the righteousness of an eternally free and holy God. We simply accept them, therefore, as telling us the truth: we *believe* our compunction, and have nothing to explain away in it: we do not construe it into a vain and illusory regret for what *had to be*, or think to rid ourselves of its demands by some apology or reparation to our fellows; but own to the full its grievous charge of a dereliction of a Divine trust, and shrink abashed before the eye of the Supreme Perfection.

At the same time, the consciousness that what I have realized in act is not the true Real, assures me that it has no roots and cannot stand; and that, just because I know this, I am not without the idea and love of that to which I have been faithless: so that the sacred affinity remains; the relation is not abolished; and hope springs up afresh. The local clouds of violated conscience cannot blot out the steadfast expression of eternal Will, all-embracing as the heavens: its everlasting eyes are over all, and know how to find the visual points in every answering mind. This objective persistence of a living Holiness is just the one steadying and sustaining power which condenses flying humours into force of conscience, and animates the waking toils of life with the glow of its divinest dreams. The women whom you could not frighten, and the men whom you could not move to say the false or to do the wrong,—have they not been pre-eminently (I do not say exclusively)

those who stood face to face with the Living Judge of Right, and in their own incorruptible perception heard His voice, "Stand fast, for I am with you"?—a voice which at once guarantees the possibility and completes the sanctity of the felt duty. Is it possible to deny that such conviction, with the habits of inward piety which it creates, naturally imparts stability to the will and elevation to the affections?

But this conviction, we are told, is "Metaphysical": it affirms an existence beyond phenomena; and from our religion we are to take all Metaphysics away. Be it so: then our "Moral Idealism" loses its objective hold, and becomes a mere subjective exercise of imagination: and the question is whether this will serve as well. The change (may we not say?) amounts to a removal of the ideal from the moral to the æsthetic field; whereby, though it may fix my admiration, it parts with all immediate relation to my will; for it contains in it no assurance of either its *authority* or its *possibility*, any more than is contained in the artist's dream of a statue nobler than the Apollo, or a picture more touching than the San Sisto. The bare conception of a better in character, rising in the imagination and known to be an imagination, no more touches the springs of action with the sense of what I ought to do and be, than the conception of brighter wits or finer person or happier lot. Any vain longing which it may excite is but like the wish that last night's dream were not *only* a dream, and is as likely to depress me with a nerveless feeling of inferiority as to lift me into strenuous faith. It is the peculiarity of the visions of conscience,—that which marks them off from all other play of ideality,—that they cannot be purely egoistic, and in becoming such would drop their very essence; that to a lonely, unrelated mind they would be intrinsically impossible; that they profess to come to us upon a mission, to destroy our absolutism and plant us beneath a higher which has a right to the homage of our will. If this profession be not true, the moral insight itself becomes illusory; and to detect the fraud thus put upon us

is simply to break the back of all moral power, and release the will from every pressure graver than the light weights of fancy. What seemed to be looking at us with such Divine appealing eyes is but a flattered portrait of ourselves: the tones that so deeply pierced us are but our own falsetto voice: there is neither substance in the sight, nor truth in the sound: let us pass on, as though they were not. Life, upon such terms, would be like one of those dual games, of chess or cards, in which a solitary player cheats his loneliness by personating the pair, and suffers a fictitious defeat by his own intentional mistake, and wins a hollow triumph by outwitting himself. It no less *takes two* to deliver the game of Duty from trivial pretence and give it an earnest interest. How can I look up to myself as the higher that reproaches me?—issue commands to myself which I dare not disobey?—ask forgiveness from myself for sins which myself has committed?—surrender to myself with a martyr's sacrifice?—and go through all the drama of moral conflict and enthusiasm between myself in a mask and myself in *propriâ personâ?* How far are these "emotional" semblances, these battles in the clouds, to carry their mimicry of reality? Are we to *worship* the self-ideality; to *pray* to an empty image in the air; to trust in sorrow, a creation of thought which is but a phenomenon of sorrow? No, if religious communion is reduced to a monologue, its essence is extinct and its soul is gone. It is a living relation, or it is nothing;—a response to the Supreme Reality. And vainly will you search for your spiritual dynamics without the Rock Eternal for your *πού στῶ*.

But perhaps it will be said that the moral ideal, when traced through its history, is not purely subjective, although at present a phenomenon of the individual consciousness; since it comes to us from minds other than our own; both concentrating and reflecting the social sentiment by whose light we see and in whose air we breathe; and also storing up an indefinite inheritance of ancestral judgments of

character, not only transmitted by descent, but looking down on us from the portrait-galleries of history and permeating the whole substance of literature. The standards of excellence to which admiration and reverence turn have actually formed themselves, it is urged, outside of us; they are not personal inventions which we might weave *in vacuo;* but are presented to us as the objective fruit of human experience, the last distillation of good when all foreign ingredients are left behind; and it is not therefore without reason that we refuse to interpret them as egoisms, and feel them as claims upon us rather than as fancies within us. They *do* speak to us with an external authority; but this authority it is enough to treat as *social*, without attributing to it anything transcendental and divine. Why may we not, it is asked, set our foot on this reality, and so regain the missing power? This objection proceeds from those who regard the moral sentiment as communicated rather than indigenous, — as partly borrowed in our own time from other minds, and partly a legacy in our organism from a long past. They are ready to assent to Mr. Sidgwick's statement that "on the conception of the objectivity of duty the authority of the moral sentiment depends";* but think that, since *they* have detected its rudiments and conditions of growth in external experience, *its* conception of the objectivity of duty is provided for and justified. The fallacy is obvious. It is one thing for a sentiment to owe its existence to outward conditions; it is another to carry in its meaning an objective reference: to grow from without inwards is not to look from within outwards; and the objectivity we here investigate is not in the genesis of the conception, but in its contents. Its inherent *belief* of an authority beyond us is not explained by discovering for the sentiment a foreign

* "Methods of Ethics": Supplement to 1st Edition, p. 45. See also 1st Ed. p. 62. "That in us which claims authority is never a mere sentiment, but always a faculty cognizant of an objective rule or imperative which exists independently of its effect on our feelings."

origin, physiological and psychological, of which we are wholly unconscious. The discovery is *yours* not *ours;* and its very merit for your genius depends on its having been a secret to our thought. The objective sources of our moral feeling are absolutely hidden from it; its objective authority is absolutely clear to it; to identify the two is to affirm that the same thing may be simultaneously in consciousness and out of it.

Suppose, however, the fallacy removed from this analysis by our becoming conscious of the actual origin of our moral ideal, viz., progenitors in the past, society in the present; so that, thus far, there is no hindrance to our finding in them the "objective authority," the "imperative" rule independent of our own feelings, which the sense of duty carries with it. Still, there is another fatal disqualification in them for recognition as the real object of our reverence and the ideal standard of our aspirations. They are simply the general aggregate of social sentiment in our own and prior generations, the average of expected character through the ages of which we are the sons: for no means are suggested for filtering the descending stream and dropping its impurities as it flows,—its animal taint, its false admirations, its bitter selfishness,—and securing for us only the sweet waters of life. Can we say then that what is *thus* presented to us is *higher* than we,—higher, moreover, than our noblest and best men, in whom also and with intenser eye the conscience retains its upward look? No; historical and actual Society constitutes, by its opinions, a force larger indeed, stronger, more enduring than we; but not even approaching our own ideal, much less passing away beyond it towards infinitude. Nay more; social opinions are either the expression of conscience already there, and then they are the effect of the very ideal they are supposed to form; or, they tell simply what men like and dislike and mean to insist upon with each other; and then they are not moral at all; the influence which proceeds from them is coercive only, not

sacred,—compressing reluctant wills, but releasing none into a free enthusiasm. The objectivity, therefore, which is supplied to us by this doctrine is of the wrong kind for drawing forth the homage of reverent affection, and can offer only the blankest disappointment to any true moral idealism.

Besides, if the object in which the authority rests is a continuous and universal social will, it is for us a mere abstraction, in resorting to which we are aware that it is a figment or economy of thought, which cannot really exercise rights over us or claim any rational veneration. However subject we may be to impose upon ourselves by giving substance to such mental creations, they can never wield over us the power of concrete being, unless within their epitome images gleam forth of individual persons and visible scenes that have become endeared. Thus there is a magic in such words as *home* and *country*, through the generality of which faces look at us, and fields and villages are seen: and these may become the occasion of some minor idolatries of the heart, shaping themselves, however, into the innocent forms of conscious personification and fervent song. But abstractions which have no such contents,—*e.g.*, Law, Reason, Wealth, Opinion, — whatever pranks they may play with our Logic, cannot persuade us to bow down and worship them. If the only *object* you have to offer for human homage be an impersonal conception of this kind, it is easy to see what will become of our religion under the change. We have only to substitute for the familiar terms of personal piety, which speak of "God" and the human "Soul," any of their supposed modern equivalents when the "Metaphysics" are discharged, and then estimate the gain or loss. Will then the "Benedicite" swell with the same tones of joy, when it has to sing,—"Bless the *Eternal Law*, all ye its works; bless the Eternal Law, O my synthesis of organs"? Will the contrition which now cries,—"Blot out my transgressions," "Cast me not away," "A broken heart Thou dost

not despise," pour out its sorrows to a deaf "ideal," and shed its passionate tears on an abstraction that cannot wipe them away? Will any moonlit form be seen kneeling in our Gethsemanes, and rising from prostrate anguish to sublime repose through the prayer, "O thou *Eternal Not-ourselves that makest for righteousness*, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt"? Will any Crucified one lose the bitterness of Death in crying, "*O Stream of Tendency*, into thy hands I commit my spirit"? And to the Martyr, stoned to death, will any Heaven open and any Vision come, when he exclaims, "*Great Ensemble of Humanity*, receive me"? For my part, I cherish the hope that our unsatisfied "Modern Thinker," after vain trial of such devotions, may return to his rest, and say with a natural reversion of heart, "O Thou once Unknown, I thank Thee that though Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, Thou hast revealed them unto Babes."

Our comparison, then, of the effects on life of the subjective and objective ideal sums itself up in this: that without *personal relations* between the Human and the Divine, Religion is divested of all its higher attributes and intenser forces: it loses its link with morals: it ceases to transfigure the affections: it relinquishes its grasp upon the will. It was by emphasizing these relations that Judaism became indomitable; and by universalizing them that Christianity laid hold of the foremost nations and rose into the foremost faith of mankind; creating and diffusing a heart-worship, a self-reverence and self-surrender, a depth of spiritual experience, a literature of character and devotion, and a breadth of social compassion, which are the redeeming features of modern civilization. To paralyse these relations is to relapse into Paganism,—a Paganism, too, with emptying temples and retreating gods,—and to set up again the mutual play of Man and Nature, with the sanctity lost from both. The needs of

the future cannot be provided for by any such helpless reaction, which forfeits what we have gained by reversion to what has been discarded; but only by ascending to a more commanding point, whence contrasts melt in harmony, and the outlooks to the right and to the left are embraced in one horizon and form but undulations of one world.

An undertone of pathetic regret may sometimes be heard in even the most confident critics of Christian Theism; as if, in substituting their abstractions, they were conscious in their hearts of administering a dangerous anæsthetic to Religion, which might leave it speechless and paralytic, if it even survived at all. They plead, however, that the risk must be run; and that, to save any remnant of moral life, the organism of faith must suffer excision of some members which have hitherto been the seat of an intense vitality. Men have always taken for granted that the Supreme Power "thinks and loves"; but the critics have now laid it down that these predicates "cannot be *verified*,"—a dictum which, giving no account of itself, relies for its effect on mere supercilious iteration. If, in Mr. Arnold's vocabulary, to "verify" means to "*test by experiment*," the complaint is true, but irrelevant: the inner attributes of the Supreme Cause cannot be submitted to Baconian experiments, with registered results tabulated under "Sic" and "Non." Yet their exemption from this criterion does not discredit their existence: for if a Divine Mind were really there, and in its essence were purely and only Thought and Love, it would equally transcend the interrogations of our experience. It is not by such methods that spiritual truths can be extorted. But if "to *justify by sufficient reason*" is here equivalent to "verification," the complaint, though relevant, is unfounded: for we are guided by no other reason in attributing thought and love to our fellow-men than that which warrants our ascription of them to God. In neither case have we any *immediate* apprehension of these invisible affections of mind: in *that*

degree of closeness they are known only as exercised by ourselves: in others we read them only by having thus learned their signs; and precisely the signs which assure us that we are not in a mad-house, but among companions directed by intelligence and moved by sympathy, repeat themselves in the legible order, beauty, and tendencies of the world. *So* similar are the marks in the two instances, that if intellect and feeling are allowed their causality in the one, legitimate induction (as Mr. Mill himself insists) requires their admission in the other: they must operate in both, or else in neither. How cogent this resemblance is, curiously appears from the fact that, with our modern men of science, it has become usual to accept this dilemma; and, as they will not admit Mind to be operative in Nature, they actually deny its efficiency in us. Both are automata alike; and all would go on the same, mechanically unrolling the scenery of life and history, though the superfluous appendage of consciousness were cut off. It is beyond the scope of my subject to criticize this pretended completion, but real subversion, of the philosophy of Descartes. Far be it from me to deny that in this, its last exploit, Reason has fairly done for itself and proved its own inefficacy. The interest of the speculation for the present consists in this,—that the parallelism between the Universe and Man is plainly indestructible; that the exclusion of intellectual power from Nature cancels it also in us; and that its self-assertion in us rationally secures its presence and its sway in Nature. If Nature is automatic only, so are we: if we are actuated by thought and love, so is Nature. The parallelism used to be denied: it is now admitted; and the ultimate "verification" is thrown back upon our fundamental self-knowledge of action from purpose and affection. There we may be content to leave it.

I conclude, therefore, as I began, with deprecating the separation between what are called the "Metaphysics" and the ethics of our supreme beliefs. These beliefs,

whose fertilizing influence is first felt far lower down, are found, when followed upwards to their springs, to have two co-ordinate sources,—one in the intellectual, the other in the moral region of our nature; the former bringing us to a transcendent *Cause;* the latter, to a transcendent *Righteousness;* together finding their unity in an Eternal *Will.* The exigencies of thought in dealing with its ultimate problems may require us, and the artifices of analysis may enable us, to contemplate them as distinct, and assign to them their respective lines of descent upon and through the mind and character. But this detachment is *our* work, not *theirs;*—not a fact of life, but an illusion of the schools. In the common sense and feeling of men, and in the faith of Christ, they perfectly blend, and in blending support and complete each other; and no such strange paradox meets us, as the conception of a Universal Cause that has no character, or a Perfect Righteousness that has no Causality. The final object of the Reason and the final home of the Conscience are the same: these faculties are but the two wings that bear us thither; and if you disable either, we vainly struggle and never rise. Religion that is *mere* metaphysics offers us but a pale and icy reality: "Religion *without* metaphysics" offers us but a painted dream.

The truth of which the new doctrine is a caricature is perhaps this:—that the *progressive element* of Religion is to be found in an ever-expanding moral ideal as human experience enlarges and the human conscience increases its refinement and its range. New social perplexities of duty, new sufferings for compassion, new virtues for veneration, new temptations for conquest, enter the field as the ages open, and leave the old formulas of righteous life inadequate: and in nothing will a true piety show itself more than in freely embracing its more comprehensive trust, and suffering no filaments of habit to detain it from a higher perfectness. On the ontological side of Religion, —in the conception of Primal Being and Power,—there is

no such process of advance: it is a fixed thought, and, as a necessary idea of Reason, does not add to its contents, but remains "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Precisely, however, on this account is it the indispensable substratum for the moving images and varying colours of goodness and beauty as they unfold. Without a permanent there can be no change; and the Ideal which for ever grows must in its essence be secured upon the Real. It is idle to talk of evolution and laws of phenomenal advance, as if they superseded all beyond themselves. "Phenomena" of nothing, "Evolution" of emptiness,—what are such phrases but a Greek and Latin gibberish? To make a show of itself, there must be something behind: to develop itself, there must be a plenitude within; the very words bespeak the whole reality they are intended to deny.

And unless we are to throw away all idea of homogeneity and proportion between cause and effect, and between instinctive tendency and its fulfilment, the Rational and the Moral in us can neither have their beginning nor reach their end, in the absence of Divine Reason and Divine Right. If our human experience teaches us anything certain, it is this: that it is Thought which kindles thought, and Love which elicits love, and Character which moulds and refines character: and *that*, not *upwards*, the inferior prevailing to better the superior; but *downwards*, the greater lifting the less. To reverse this order, to educe Mind from what is not yet mind, and Conscience from blind and neutral force, is to put more into the effect than the cause provides, and *ipso facto* to convict the explanation of incompetency. And similarly when we face round to see whither our nature looks instead of whence it comes, we find not an appetency, affection, or energy of our being, that fails to meet its fitting *object:* through the range of the animal, the domestic, the social life, the several relations, of which one term is within us, complete themselves by hitting upon the other in the external scene. The scientific

intellect slakes its thirst on the order and beauty of the world; and even when it ventures, in sympathy with the *style* of nature, on guesses and forecasts too daring for immediate belief, its vaticinations have often struck the truth. Is then this analogy to be first broken when we reach the highest levels of our humanity? Are we *there* flung out of all relations, though still furnished with their inward drift and prayer?—still sent to seek, with prejudgment that we shall not find? If we are to assume any concinnity in our nature, or any harmony of it with its theatre of being, such disappointment of its ends carries in it an improbability revolting to the Reason. And can then the "Moral Idealism" step in and deliver us? Yes; if it speaks to us, not in its own name, but in that of its Inspirer; if it stands before the Living God, taking thence the inner power and sending thither its secret prayer, and can utter its prophecies as foregleams of His righteous Will. At such a voice, Conscience becomes transfigured from human to Divine, and life on earth is turned into a "kingdom of heaven." But if, because its God is dead, it can only display its own imaginings, and propose them in terms of personal suggestion, without an organic faith to integrate them with the possible and the intended, it will wield no persuasive influence, but speak as a prophet ere yet the live coal has touched his lips. Its visions will pale and fade; its promises dissolve in unreality: and the sickened conscience that has trusted to it, sink into helpless debility. Human life is too strong for the grasp of spiritual æsthetics: let it remain within the hold of the All-ruling hand.

XII.

THE RELATION BETWEEN ETHICS AND RELIGION.*

CHRISTENDOM, through all its vicissitudes, has preserved a distinctive moral physiognomy, giving to its history and literature an interest very different from that which attaches to Pagan times. Its eye has been fixed on an ideal image of perfection variously unlike the heroes and sages of Greece and Rome. But, notwithstanding this practical unity of moral reverence through eighteen centuries, the attitude of the Christian Church towards the theoretic study of Ethics is marked by striking contradictions. It was impossible for the priesthood to work the system of *Confession*, and save it from a chaos of discrepancies, without classifying and assimilating decisions distant in time and place, and gradually eliciting, from this mass of *case-law*, a body of principles and rules applicable to the whole contents of human temptation and perplexity. Through her library of Casuistry, the Catholic Church has become the parent of our modern Moral Philosophy, and has conveyed into it her own assumption that the right guidance of life is inseparable from the functions of religion. On the other hand, Luther, denying all religious value to Morals, flung them, as a mere matter of police, into the hands of the civil magistrate. And the first volume of the "Congregational Lectures" instituted about half a century ago was

* Opening of Session, Manchester New College, London. October, 1881.

written to prove that Christianity repudiates Ethics as *ab initio* impossible to the vitiated reason and conscience of a fallen nature. The study thus ignominiously cast out to the "infidel," he in his turn is very ready to pick up, all the more from its being unencumbered with theology. He has quite a right to take these divines at their word and refute them by effecting, if he can, on independent ground, the construction which is declared impossible. We cannot be surprised that the supercilious airs of the religious towards Morals should in due season be assumed by the moralist towards Religion; and that, at least in the high moods of both, a divorce should be agreed upon as the only end of strife. And so we see offended Philosophy building its palace and setting up its separate establishment as far as possible from the Church, without even a window looking upon the Abbey towers. A quiet observer who loves them both may hold his peace and be content with his own sorrow at their averted looks; but may well doubt whether a wedlock beginning with the devout enthusiasm of youth, consecrated by long fellowship in trial and in victory, and attested by noble offspring that bear the features of both parents, can be permanently repented of; and will rather believe that, when the crisis of hurt pride and harassed spirits has passed, returning memories will draw from each, unconfessed to the other, frequent tears of reconciliation. Some natural feeling of this kind with regard to the present alienation between Ethical doctrine and Religious, suggests to me a few remarks on the real relation between the two.

Ethics treat of the right-ordering of Personal Relations, so far as these may be made better or worse by our will.

The terms of this definition, though not obscure, it may be well to unfold by a few words of comment.

Personal Relations constitute the prior condition and very matter itself of Morality, and in their absence it has no room to be. An absolutely solitary individual, if invested with power of various action and disposition, might affect himself for better or worse by what he did, but

would be subject to no obligation and incur no guilt. The harm he occasioned would be a blunder and not a sin; the good which he earned would prove his wisdom, not his virtue. If, instead of being lonely on the field of life, he has companions sentient but only animal, he enters on semi-personal relations and wakes to the first rudiments of Duty; the sensibilities of the creatures around him stirring in him two or three of the springs of action, whose relative worth, when more largely realized, fills up the contents of Conscience. Though his companions are not his peers, related to him as he is to them, yet it is in virtue of what they have in common with human nature that they are qualified to teach him the first lesson of Character.

Where the two natures are thus unequal, the morality which is rendered possible by their presence together is obviously limited to that one which is personal: the other is the occasion of duty in him without becoming liable to any reciprocal obligation. A parrot, kindly and rightly treated by his owner, will repay the pains bestowed on his education by amusing accomplishments and friendly ways. But these habits, moulded by the discipline of pleasure and pain, have not the ethical quality with which the master's action is tinctured: being no objects of ideal choice, but outwardly shaped by application of the physiological forces which dispose of the organism. The mere capacity of an animal for being "broken in," *i.e.*, for being modified in its action through fear and hope, does not constitute personality or confer responsibility; and no integral moral relation arises until both natures are homogeneous and both personal.

Hence it follows that the relation, as ethically regarded, includes, besides the adjustment of external action, an indispensable concomitant of internal thought or feeling: for it is just here, *i.e.*, in the absence of preferential consent or intention, that the animal obedience is defective. To say that *personal* relations are essentially *mental* rela-

tions, is to say that the essential business of Ethics is with the *inner springs of action.*

Once more: our definition presupposes that the personal relations "may be made better or worse by our will." If I am master of no such alternative, if at each moment only one thing is possible to me, or if, out of two, neither is better than the other, I am the subject simply of natural law, not of moral. Differences of tendency may still be the object of scientific investigation, like differences of stature or digestion; but there is nothing to distinguish the study of what *ought to be* from the study of what *is;* and Ethics pluck up their fence and surrender their field to psychology,—unless indeed the biologist, who has long been squatting there, has already got too firm a hold.

Now, for Ethics thus defined I do not ask for any other place of birth and exercise than the common life of persons together, *i.e.*, a human Society. That scene contains within itself adequate provision for their growth in individuals and their consolidation into Law: there is no need for them to be superimposed *ab extra*, added on as an appendix to the constitution of the world, as if they had been forgotten or too little emphasized in its substantive design. Whoever thinks, by insisting on such a supplement to an original humanity, to win a celestial sanctity for the law of righteousness, defeats his own object: he parts the two elements which he wishes to blend, and by way of making Religion necessary makes Morals impossible. For, to a nature from which Conscience has been omitted, no Law can ever be sacred, no right and wrong ever be revealed. It may be externally reduced to rule: but whatever conformity with order is thus produced is worthless as the genuflections of an automaton or the mimicry of an ape: whatever is willed on other grounds than its inherent excellence is foreign to the sphere of character. Without inward appreciation of that excellence in its several degrees and consenting adoption of it for its own sake, goodness cannot be: and if a Creator, in projecting a moral world, should

omit to render this appreciation immanent in the nature of its people, no repairing message could overtake the defect. Thunders of command, tables of law, oracles of instruction, may terrify their imagination, engage their memory, increase their knowledge; but will not penetrate beyond the vestibule of their mind, for want of interpreter to unlock the sanctuary within.

But if for our purpose we do not require more than human nature, neither can we put up with less. We cannot dispense with any of its essential contents. In order to build up a system of relations ethically organized, we must start with men and not beasts; *i.e.*, with beings not blindly thrust hither and thither by chance instincts, but conscious of difference in their impulses, and directed by concurrent intelligence Take away this common base of harmony; suppose, with Hobbes, each individual set up for himself as a separate centre of repulsion, with an assertive appetite for all that he can touch, resolute to get all he can and surrender only what he must; and whatever equilibrium you may elicit from these data is not a moral equilibrium: it is but the Statics of desolating passion, not the Dynamics of ordered and unresting affections, and can only constitute, as Hobbes himself insisted, the enthronement of Force and the negation of all baffled Right. I will not say that no community could thus be formed and hold together, though even the gregarious habit of animals is not the product of mere self-love: but I do say that the bond on which it depends is not ethical or distinctively human; that its theatre is that of interest only and not of duties; and that its material,—the mutilated essence of humanity,—does not supply an adequate school for the unfolding of a private or public conscience.

Or shall I be corrected here, and asked to see in this material, not the "*mutilated*," but rather the *uncompleted and inchoate* essence of humanity? Will it be said that Hobbes, in omitting some elements which he need not have denied to our self-knowledge, only anticipated the

theory of Evolution, and astutely surmised the process through which the brute nature had become the human? and have we to confess it as at least an established probability that the adequate cause of orderly society is the "primitive savage";—of human rights, the violence of wrong;—of thought, sensation;—of sensation, organic structure;—of organism, the inorganic; and so on through the stages of the "beautifully less," till we reach the zero, where plus and minus keep house together and become the Adam and Eve of all things? Be it so. For aught I know, the remote progenitor of a biped may be a quadruped, or a centipede: do you expect me then to place these creatures among moral beings? or to rank man with the unmoral? or to say that between moral and unmoral there is no real difference? Am I to think that when the conditions are provided which will set up an Ascidian, nothing more is wanted to make sure of an Aristotle and a Shakespeare, an Antonine and an Alfred the Great? I must decline to accept any such equation between the minimum of causation and the maximum of effect, and must supply in thought whatever is needed to cover the total difference, in quantity and quality, between the insignificant beginning and the majestic end. Whether the bodily forms which enshrine this enormous increment of creative power are of a million types or the continuity of one, is a question interesting to the naturalist, but in no way critical to the moral philosopher; the consciousness of guilt is just as far from toothache or hunger when lodged in the same type of organism with them, as when put into another invented for its sake. Let it appear when and where it may, it is a thing *suis generis*, which disowns an utterly heterogeneous source, and, though co-existing with dissimilar functions, can no more be deduced thence than vision from hearing. If you have nothing to work with but animal pleasures and pains, and unlimited time for their experience and transmission, you can never hope, through all eternity, to build up a conscience; or, if you do, you build up what

your data will not support, and you will have to let fall as an illusion. Inherited accumulation of expediences may account for an ever quicker and finer and larger sense of expediency, but for nothing else; as an infinitude of sand-grains may make a shore, and an infinitude of drops a sea, but neither effect can take the place of the other. Add as long as you will, if the items of the sum are all prudences, the total will not come out as a duty. To this truth Mr. Herbert Spencer himself bears conclusive witness: for, while he undertakes to show how, from sentient experiences, the idea of obligation obtains its *de facto* origin, he insists that *de jure* it has no business to be there; and that we should never have it, did we not misread our inward history, for want of his clear psychologic light. He gives its genesis in order to exhibit it, not as a legitimate derivative, but as a detected error; and accordingly infers that "the sense of duty or moral obligation is transitory" and "fades," * like any other illusion. What more emphatic proclamation can be made that, operating with a merely animal and not a personal humanity, you can never justify the Ethical life or admit the possibility of an Ethical Science? For both have their very focus in this superseded sentiment of Duty; whence radiate all the affections characteristic of the one, and all the lines of meaning which define the language of the other. Instead of discrediting the highest stage at present reached by our nature and putting faith only in its lowest groundwork of sense and impulse, we may reasonably invert the order, and estimate the beginning by the end, and refuse to treat the nature as present till the whole of it is there.

But now let us suppose all these naturalistic theories and weakening conditions removed out of the way, and full play to be given, in a human society, to the ethical conditions and affections, in their present degree of maturity; and represent to ourselves the form of character which, in their isolation, they tend to produce. United with others in a

* "Data of Ethics," p. 127.

common moral nature, we take for granted a fundamental agreement about right and wrong, and never hesitate, in case of apparent divergence, to rely on its removal by seeking coincidence at an earlier point. We regard ourselves, therefore, as all under a common rule by which each must be tried, and which is as little variable as any self-evident maxim of common sense, and by their several degrees of conformity to which or deviation from it we range men on the scale of righteousness or guilt. This rule, however, we are aware, is not an imperative definition of action, but a relative valuation of motive; and as the same preference of motive may give rise to any one of several acts, and the same act proceed from any one of several attitudes of motive, the conditions of the problem are always interior and out of sight; so that our judgments, if formed on *conduct* alone, are liable to go far astray: of its *wisdom or folly* we have a ready calculus in its *consequences;* its *goodness or guilt* we can only presume by surmising its invisible principle.

Judgment in other matters assumes no more than a determinate criterion of value: Ethical judgment assumes besides a personal power of conforming to it. To criticize an elm as awry and a man's stature as short, it is enough that you have the idea of a symmetrical tree and a well-proportioned figure: in criticizing another's character, you presuppose that he has the true idea as well as you, and that it rests with him to realize it; that he knows his duty and can do it. It cannot be denied that the whole system of moral conceptions, feelings and language, rests upon the belief in Free Will, and deals with man as (within its particular range) the real cause of what he is and does. But for this, who could suffer compunction for a lie any more than for a squint, or shame for delirium tremens more than for a typhoid fever, or feel more indignant disgust at the crimes of a Cæsar Borgia than at the rapacity of a wolf? Remorse for sin would be impossible but for the consciousness that it lies at our door: and the blame with which we visit the guilt of another is

measured by the merited self-reproaches of his own heart. It is vain to pretend that we praise and condemn, approve and disapprove, the acts of another in order to procure their repetition or arrest,—making an investment in good words with an eye to a suitable return; and that, except to modify the future, we should have no such feeling to express. These moral sentiments are distinctly retrospective, judicial sentences upon the past, and estimates of present character, and *not* a device for managing something yet to come: and their undoubted influence on the human will as incentives and restraints depends on their just estimate of what is irrevocably committed, and would be spoiled if they were understood to be a mere policy of expectation. The modern determinist frankly admits that the postulate of freedom does underlie the ordinary experiences and judgments of the Conscience; and only draws the conclusion—"So much the worse for them." Remorse, in his eyes, is an absurdity; repentance, a weakness; merit and demerit, with all the feelings they excite, fancies due to our ignorance of causes; responsibility, a mistake, if it means more than that no act is without its consequences; and duty, an imaginary bond, unless understood simply of men's reasonable expectations from you. As these ideas and affections are such integral parts of the Ethical disposition that it is difficult to see what is left of it when they are gone, I cannot be wrong in setting down the faith in Free Will among its characteristics. Whether the faith is true or not, it is no part of my present purpose to inquire. But of its effect upon the side of our nature to which it attaches itself, an idea may be given by a pregnant remark of Spinoza's that towards a being supposed to be free, affections far more intense will be felt than towards one under necessity.* If this be so, we must assign to the type of character we are considering, not only an extended range, but an exceptional energy, of affection.

If Ethics pure and simple have for their object the

* Ethica III. Pr. xlix.

right-ordering of personal relations, then in the absence of personal relations they will have nothing to say. In proportion as action and feeling have only reflex influence upon ourselves, escaping all contact with the lives of others, we shall regard them, from this point of view, as not falling within the scope of duty, and shall assert our freedom from every claim. Not that the hypothesis of isolation can ever be completely realized till the world is composed of desert islands, with a man apiece: but there are various near approaches to lonely exercises of will, secret corners of the mind and life where others seem to have no right of entrance; and if there we take a dispensation from all that intermeddles with our self-regards, and assume an unqualified independence, we shall not sensibly depart from our fundamental conception of morals. Every one must be conscious of at least occasional temptations to "do what he likes with his own"; and it is but an extension of this temper that is so often seen in the combination of strict honour and noble conscientiousness in public and social affairs with deplorable anarchy of personal habit.

For the group of ideas and affections hitherto described we need look no further than the experiences of human society. The peculiar cast of character which emerges from their dominance is singularly wholesome, the very staff of sustenance for the normal good of the world; not rich and rare, as the wine of genius or the fruits of art, but welcome as the "daily bread" which better fits our daily prayer and meets our constant need. The sense of Duty is to our humanity what gravitation is to the physical universe: and the solid natures in which it masses itself restrain whatever is erratic, and discipline dependent minds to orderly movement. What counterpoise have we against the delirium of passion, the grasp of cupidity, the phthisis of romance, but the indomitable faithfulness of men who take no counsel but of their conscience, whom no pretences can beguile, no threats dismay, who look truth and right straight in the face, and, if they see a

neglected duty, seize it for their own, "proniores ad officia, quod spernebantur"? These are the men who feel sure that, if a thing is right, it must be possible: and this faith in human causality, extinguishing the sense of difficulty, sweeps from their path the ideal obstacles which, far more than any substantial checks, arrest the energies of weaker natures. For the simply conscientious, no interval is visible, or even conceivable, between perceiving the best and executing it. No line for them is so straight as that from thought to action. Doubtless a mere sprinkling of such righteous souls may suffice at times to avert destruction from a perishing community.

At the same time, where the tension of conscience is pitched thus high, more is expected from the reason and moral sense of others than they will be found to give. He who simply wields his freedom does not understand the slavery of more ordinary minds: from the dependent he demands independence; from the frivolous, devotedness; from the self-indulgent, sacrifice. And when these exactions remain without response, he never suspects that he has laid too heavy a trust upon the hampered and sickened human causality, but pours out reproaches on the apathy and shortcomings of others. Seeing only what might have been had they but done their part, he criticizes and scolds, and contracts a temper censorious and unsympathetic, with scarcely hope enough to sustain his unaided fidelity. His disappointment in their perversity does but increase the rigidity of his own convictions: losing all tenderness and gaining no humility, he falls out of tune with the affections and wills that are his sole allies. He cannot reach the hearts of men. He wonders how it is that his moral reforms make so little way. He has shown their reasonableness: the proof is complete: assent is not refused: but somehow the springs of power are not there! To what degree of repulsiveness this type of character may descend, can be unknown only to the happy few who have never met with the rational and ethical prig who has

alighted upon some short cut to the perfection of the world, and goes about offering with solemn assurance the universal pill that is to cure our sins and reinstate us to-morrow in Paradise. Many a projector of this order has it been my lot to know. With adequate self-complacency, he is perhaps the most comfortable, but the dreariest of mortals; persuaded that he has the secret of omnipotence, and smitten with utter ineffectiveness; for ever turning the barrel of a dead organ which has no tune to any but himself. It would be a relief if he would but be angry at his failure, curse the evils he cannot heal, and take offence at the nature of things which baffles him. Give me rather the passionate invective of the pessimist, who at least is moved by pity to his defiance, and, if he cannot have the universe on his side, is content to spend himself in struggling against it on behalf of suffering humanity. Better to remonstrate, like Job, with the order of nature, than like his friends, to ignore it: thus far its Infinite Author is "a Jealous God"; He will sooner bear to be denounced than to be forgot.

Why is it that pure moral ideas may result in so imperfect a type of character, and moral reforms in effects so feeble? What is amiss with them? Are they not true? Are they not good? Whence then their impotence? Yes, they are both; but, so long as the horizon of humanity shuts in their view, there is a larger truth, there is an infinite good, beyond their little field of vision, the light and warmth of which no sooner flow in than they kindle both the seer and the seen with a new glow, turning assent into enthusiasm, and suffusing a rugged world with divine beauty. The affections hitherto noticed arise from the contemplation of *human* causality, and receive their shock because they have not reckoned with the boundless store beyond, and are confused by its inrush upon their schemes. The Conscience, as thus far regarded, has played the part of righteous judge between man and man, never doubting that its right-ordering of personal relations was herein

complete; and if its judgments have been uttered with too little majesty of voice, and have gained but faint obedience from listening hearts, may it not be because there is one personal relation left unrealized,—the crown and interpreter of all,—their inward sanctity, their embracing glory? If Ethics are to cover the entire ground of *character*, and if in our character there be a part which has reference to the Infinitude which surrounds our life, a system of thought, a type of feeling, which omits this part and treats it as though it were not, can be but a truncated moral structure, resembling the whole much as a Gothic Hôtel de Ville resembles a cathedral without its transepts and its towers.

So long as duty is regarded as a human self-enactment, it involves no personal relations except of men *inter se*. Treated as a factor in our egoistic psychology, the idea is taken as merely subjective and coming from ourselves. Treated as a social product fastened upon each individual by his fellows, it comes from our equals. In the former case, it ranks with any other phenomenon of our history: in the other, it stands on the level of a coercion or a convention among associates. In neither case does it speak to us from a superior, or carry in it any imperative right. If it is the voice of our fellows, it may be louder, but is not auguster than our own; if it is an altercation between two desires of the self, each may contradict the other without making good its title to command the whole. Within a unit, or where life is all upon one plane, Obligation cannot be, but only conflict and equilibrium of Force; and hence the fatal weakness of the Moralist who, after planting our nature in this position, continues to talk of what it *ought* to be. He eviscerates Duty, and turns it into a mummy, and then expects it to get up and walk. It is the total failure of a Supreme Authority, not of compelling strength but of pleading Perfection, that paralyses him, and constrains him to fly before the first fanatic mob that sweeps the field in the name of the Holy Ghost. The law which

he asserts, another can deny; and that which is made by men to-day may be unmade by men to-morrow; and no preacher of such shifting relativity of truth and righteousness will ever speak home to the undying needs of the human conscience.

Is he then forbidden by veracity to speak in any higher name than his own? In his private controversies of temptation, when the argument is at its height between some splendid treachery and a guiltless ignominy, is the difference between them preached to him in his own name? Did he institute it? Was it his will that planted it out visibly in the frame of things and the hearts of men? Is his consciousness of it simply a play to and fro of his particular ideas, and their eager polemic only a soliloquy? Is it not rather a reality,—an eternal reality,—that looks in upon him and speaks to him? And has he not to own in it an *Authority* which is so far from being of his setting up, that his whole personality bows in homage to it,—an authority so different from mere Power, that Omnipotence itself could neither create nor cancel it? Now *authority* expresses a relation, not between mind and things, but between mind and mind: no physical object, no unconscious phenomenon, can exercise it: it is a purely personal attribute, a tie of dependence between the higher and the lower; and, wherever it is felt, there are two minds present with each other in uplooking and uplifting attitude. Thus in the ultimate penetralia of the conscience the Living Spirit of God himself is met, it may be unconsciously, it may be consciously. If you enter with the spiritual eye blindfolded, you will not indeed be wholly disappointed of your oracle; but, in receiving it and taking it away, you will suppose yourself alone: you will keep it as a precept of wisdom, and approve it as you might a proverb of Solomon's, and, in commending it to others, will look out for logic to support it. But the very soul of it will escape you, because it is one term of a personal relation, of which the other remains hidden from you. If, on the other hand,

you have discovered on what holy ground you stand, you will issue forth in quite another mood: you will have, not a proposition to prove, but a message to deliver; and, fresh from communion with the Infinite Inspirer, you will speak "as one having authority, and not as the Scribes."

The moment the experiences of Conscience are recognized as a personal relation, the whole body of Morals starts up as in life from the dead, and becomes transfigured with light flashing from the contact of two worlds. In height, in depth, in volume, in sanctity, in tenderness, they are hardly less changed than the mortal putting on his immortality. Take only the following particulars.

1. The *Authority* of Duty becomes transcendent and Divine; and we understand how it is that it always gazed at us with so awful and quickening an eye, as if to fix our look, and still to pursue us though we turned away. This is intelligible, if it be the meeting of Spirit with spirit, the living touch of infinite holiness on finite temptation. But no absent power, no code of the past, no heaven or hell of the future, could draw from us such secret homage: where and when the worship is, there and then is the God. If previously it was the tendency of moral conviction to harden our independence of will and impart a Stoical rigour, this temper, which belongs only to our standing before men or Fate, must now give way, and be replaced by pure reverence and self-surrender, not to resistless Force, but to Highest Righteousness.

2. The *Scope* of Duty becomes for the first time co-extensive with the area of the Will. There is a considerable range of voluntary life for every one, where all his fellows are out of reach, or at least so faintly and remotely affected by what he feels and does, as to obtain no voice in it. This field of private thought, of individual habit, of lonely taste and occupation, it has always been difficult to reclaim from the anarchy of chance desires, or the forbidding enclosure of selfishness, and annex it to the domain of Duty. To effect this, recourse has been had to such empty

fictions as that of "Duty to ourselves"; which can be saved from contradiction only by an impossibility, viz., the splitting of "ourselves" into two agents susceptible of reciprocal obligations. The moment you fix any real sense upon the phrase, its meaning becomes simply *Prudence*, the neglect of which may constitute a solitary man a fool, but not a criminal. All this is changed in a moment on finding that we are never alone and deserted by personal relations; that when finite agents leave us, the Infinite remains; that in every consciousness of a better and a worse, his living Perfection is in converse with us, and, stripping us of arbitrary option, imparts to our selection a character of faithfulness or guilt. There is nothing, in short, to which this one transcendent personal relation does not penetrate. The whole order of the life and mind, even in the deepest solitude, feels its supervision. And matters of which even good men are apt to be heedless, *e.g.*, the limits of time and degree within which permissible desires and pursuits,—of wealth, of society, of ease and ornament, of knowledge and accomplishment,—may rightly have their way, are no longer left unregulated. A sacred light is interfused with our being from centre to circumference, and, where human affections cease to direct our path, gleams through the air and leads us on.

3. The *Volume*, or internal capacity, of the Moral Life is immeasurably expanded by gaining its religious interpretation. If it be the theme of converse between the Divine and the human mind and the expression of their affinity, our faith in Righteousness bursts the bounds of anthropology and assumes a cosmical extension. No escape from terrestrial conditions supersedes it: no withdrawal of limits from the mind would render it obsolete: for here it is, present at once in its two extremes,—at its beginning and in its consummation, born in the finite nature from the communion of the Infinite; inexhaustible, therefore, through the gradations of approach from the one to the other. And however surprising this may seem

so long as moral excellence is looked at only in the concrete form of its external offices, it becomes intelligible when we follow up character to its interior essence, and find its perfection to consist in a certain order and harmony among the spiritual springs of action. However long a mind may live, however large its powers may grow, this harmony, this ascendency of the best may become more nearly perfect, or in its perfection, if that be possible, cover a wider field. The conscience carries in its very nature a secret suspicion of this measureless possibility of goodness, and feels the presence of the vision even through its grievous blindness: hence, in uncorrupted natures, its undying humility, its inextinguishable aspiration. The moral sense, neglected and abused, may no doubt sink away, and on its lower line of movement die out in the dark; but, exercising its normal function on the upper line, it touches no terminus and dreams of none. Its intensest speed it deems intolerably slow: if it have feet, it longs for wings: if it have wings, it envies the lightning: it has always spaces to traverse which it cannot overtake. This ideal infinitude of excellence for our mind is but the reflex of its real infinitude for the Supreme Mind.

4. The *Enthusiasm* of the Moral Life is intensified by the consciousness of its Divine Source. That it is the meeting-ground of kindred sympathy between our nature and God's, where he lets us into the confidences of his thought and the partnership of his causality, is in itself enough to glorify the human characteristics and to endear the Divine, and kindle the zeal for bringing them into harmony. But, over and above this general tendency, there is a provision, in the inward constitution of our conscience, which gives a special impulse in the same direction. It sees the springs of action in a certain order of rank in excellence,—an order that speaks the preferences of God. And among the terms at the summit of that scale are Compassion, Sympathy, Wonder (devotion to truth), and Reverence (devotion to goodness); in short, the group

(name the members as you will) of disinterested and spiritual affections whence all fruitful inspiration has ever burst upon the world. These, then, are the fountains of life most dear to the Soul of souls: and those are most like him whose energies, detained by no inner frosts, flow freely forth in streams of Love that nourish the roots of every human good. The Ethical spirit is often supposed to be cold and scrupulous and negatively correct, shrinking from innumerable things and worshipping nothing. In its period of critical legalism, prior to its new birth, it may be so; but once sweetened with the waters of regeneration and initiated into its Divine relations, it breathes the air of quite another world; discovers that the best vigilance against evil is to fling yourself away into some humane and purifying good; and, since the life of God is the life of love, gains assurance that, with an infinite ally, the battle of righteousness can never lose hope and heart. The grievous features of the human lot which, in the natural stage, produce only dejection, become, in the spiritual, an impelling power. The sadness of the actual to so many sufferers, when touched by faith in their latent possibilities, lets in a kindling air, and turns the mournful smoke into a living flame. And the inequalities of men, which once seemed to be stereotyped by nature in caste, in serfdom, in slavery, and to close the door upon the future, no sooner catch the transforming light of the common human responsibility, than they wake the justice of converted souls, and shame the former pride and scorn, and raise vast armies of compassion intent on rescue, and penetrate life with mutual respect.

Such, then, I take to be the connection between Ethics and Religion; the latter, as containing the Supreme Personal Relation, completing the former, and, in doing so, transfiguring it throughout. The attempt of our own age to separate the two, and prove that it makes no difference to Morals what theory we adopt, or whether any at all,

respecting the universe beyond our own nature, is full of pathetic interest, as expressing an anxious resolve, amid the disintegration of other faiths, to save at least the minimum of conditions for our orderly life with one another. But, intellectually, this excellent motive does not excuse so great a paradox. It is simply impossible to be indifferent to the kind of Power which presides over the system of things; and the choice practically lies between two conceptions,—Necessity and Will,—the one blind, the other with moral ends. Whichever you adopt carries with it a train of consequences direct into the sphere of our experience.

Blind Necessity on the throne of the Universe means submission without law for ("Necessity has no law"); internecine war through the whole field of life; equilibrium, attained on the line of least resistance; society, suspended upon a truce; every nation, a camp; every individual, a sentinel against rivals; the strong, hunting the weak and laughing their saviours to scorn; history, reduced to a perpetual "massacre of the innocents"; and morals, to a persistent getting what you can and doing what you must.

Righteousness on the throne of the Universe means the subordination of might to right; concord, composed out of the varieties of life; equilibrium, effected by concurrent attractions; society, resting on the common recognition of a binding law; every nation, a province of the "kingdom of God"; every individual, a member of a "Sacred band"; the strong, bearing the burdens of the weak, and the weak holding on to the rear of the strong; history, an "Education of the human race"; and morals, the Divine ideal which that education is to work out.

I do not deny that each of these theories may cite phenomena that seem to countenance it; but I affirm that the characteristic phenomena of the Moral world are compatible only with the second, and must be dismissed as

illusions before it can be dislodged. Is any one to be listened to who says that this would make no difference?

Religion can as little afford to forget its emergence from the Conscience, as the Conscience to shrink from its religious transfiguration. The essence of Religion lies in communion between the finite and the Infinite Mind, between the individual Soul and the Universal. Where this communion is based specifically on the Ethical consciousness, it is a felt relation between Will and Will, a harmony or discord between Spirit and Spirit, in which two free Causalities are in presence of each other, in the light or under the cloud. Here, the human Personality asserts itself in the very moment and by the very act of surrender and abnegation, and never rises into higher liberty than when sinking into identification with the supreme intent. But if you quit this unique ground of *Moral* experience, and for any other side of your nature throw open the windows to the Infinite, the overwhelming inrush of the Primary Causality will utterly drown the secondary, abolish the conditions of personality, and dissolve all detached existence in the deified cloud with which the Mystic fills all space. The imagination, brooding on the fixed idea that "the All is only One," sees the lines of difference melt away, and accepts all states, outward and inward, as equally Divine; treats all moral distinctions as wiped out from the nature of things; and all objects alike, conscious or unconscious, as passive vehicles of the same necessitating Power. I will not urge that Religion, being the communion between two, commits suicide when, by merging one, it passes into a speculative Monism. But I dwell simply on the fact of the utter denudation, by these floods of Divine Necessity, of the whole ground on which Ethics stood: so that, if Religion can be said to remain, it cannot be a religion of *Duty*. It is true that the Mystic, in losing *himself*, is freed from a copious source of human sins. But it is a negative deliverance, even if it lasts

beyond his meditative moments; and it secures nothing better to take the place. According as his nature tends to thought, to affection, to art, he will dissolve himself away in speculation, in love, or in beauty, without a regulative order for his personal relations, or capacity for concrete action. These precarious drifts of emotion involve great danger to character. No greater gift do we owe to Christianity than the conception and consecration of *Personality:* and every influence that confuses and disturbs it softens the very nerve of modern civilization.

LOSS AND GAIN IN RECENT THEOLOGY.

PREFACE.

THE subjoined correspondence will explain the occasion of the following address, and also its mixed character, in part resembling a College Lecture, and in part a Sermon.

In case these pages should find any outer circle of readers, it may be proper to state that it is usual, at the close of the five or six years' study in Manchester New College, to mark the Student's transition from the Academic to the Pastoral life by a special religious service,—of Farewell on the part of the Teachers he leaves; of Welcome on the part of the Ministers he joins; and of self-dedication on his own part. The Valedictory portion of this service devolves on the Principal of the College. And it is in place of the Adieu to the untried preacher that the following reflections were addressed to men approved by long and various experience.

LETTER.

"To the Rev. James Martineau.

"DEAR DR. MARTINEAU,

"At the close of the present Session of Manchester New College there will be no Students who have completed their course, and consequently no Valedictory Address.

"It has occurred to some of us that this will be an opportunity not to be passed by for your old Pupils to gather together on the Thursday evening of Examination week for a special religious service, and to hear an Address from you. We therefore all earnestly join in this request, that you will consent to speak to us at such a service.

"Scattered as we are in our different posts of ministry, many of us have had but few opportunities of personally renewing our ties with the College which we have never ceased to love.

With that College the thought of you is inseparably associated as friend and teacher; and we feel that it would be a source of great delight and refreshment to us all to meet together once more to listen to the voice from which we have learned so much.

"And even should some of us, in the event of your consenting to this request, be debarred from being present, we shall still be glad to have shared in the expression of affectionate regard which prompts it.

"In the arrangements and place of the service we should desire to be guided by your own choice,—whether it should be held privately in the College Library, or whether with an open invitation to all friends in the greater publicity of Little Portland Street Chapel.

"We are, dear Dr. Martineau,

"Faithfully yours,

(Signed)

DENDY AGATE,
W. M. AINSWORTH,
R. A. ARMSTRONG,
CHARLES BEARD,
AMBROSE N. BLATCHFORD,
WILLIAM BLAZEBY,
W. COPELAND BOWIE,
J. ESTLIN CARPENTER,
ANDREW CHALMERS,
HUBERT CLARKE,
CHARLES C. COE,
HENRY W. CROSSKEY,
DAVID DAVIS,
V. D. DAVIS,
H. ENFIELD DOWSON,
ROBERT B. DRUMMOND,
JAMES DRUMMOND,
THOMAS DUNKERLEY,
ALX. GORDON,
JAMES HARWOOD,
P. M. HIGGINSON,
EDWARD L. HOWSE,
T. LLOYD JONES,
R. CROMPTON JONES,
FRANCIS HENRY JONES,
J. B. LLOYD,
REES L. LLOYD,
J. E. MANNING,
T. L. MARSHALL,
WILLIAM NAPIER,
C. J. PERRY,
CHAS. T. POYNTING,
JOHN RUSSELL,
LAWRENCE SCOTT,
J. D. HIRST SMITH,
H. SHAEN SOLLY,
FRANK WILLIAM STANLEY,
S. ALFRED STEINTHAL,
CHRISTOPHER J. STREET,
CHARLES B. UPTON,
PHILIP VANCESMITH,
DOUGLAS WALMSLEY,
JAS. T. WHITEHEAD,
PHILIP H. WICKSTEED,
JEFFREY WORTHINGTON.

March 2nd, 1881."

REPLY.

"35, Gordon Square, London, W.C.
March 4, 1881.

"DEAR FRIENDS AND FELLOW-WORKERS,

"Your letter and its request deeply move me; and I cannot wait for a second thought before I say how joyfully I shall meet you and speak to you what may be in my heart on the usual evening of the Valedictory Service in June.

"It is one thing to teach the young at College; it is quite another to interpret the lessons of life for those who are in the midst of its conflicts and rich in its experiences. And there are many of you from whom I could now learn more than I have to tell of the duties and wisdom that, in these days, may make the Christian ministry still a beneficent power.

"But if you are not tired of the old voice, speaking in the old spirit, I will not shrink from offering you what may be my last word, though it be only to say how the world looks to one who must shortly leave it.

"I should incline, if agreeable to you, to preserve, as nearly as may be, the customary form of the Valedictory Service. At least it would seem natural to retain its component elements of Hymn and Prayer and Scripture, as well as Address; and also freely to admit the sympathy of friends, from whom we can have no secrets.

"Meeting thus, we shall have no occasion to make any change in the established place or time; and it will only remain for you to distribute the parts of the service which are not mine.

"Believe me always, dear Friends,

"Yours faithfully and affectionately,

"JAMES MARTINEAU.

"To my former Pupils whose names are appended to the letter of March the 2nd, forwarded by the Rev. Valentine D. Davis."

I cannot refrain from adding, ere I part from this unique occasion, my heartfelt thanks to my old fellow-student and friend, the Rev. William Gaskell, for his supporting parti-

cipation in it. How greatly its interest was deepened by his sympathy can hardly be understood except by the few survivors whose College ties have never been weakened for fifty-five years. To both of us, as veterans soon to quit the field, it was a true joy to meet the growing company of well-trained and faithful successors, already armed with better weapons than we shall lay down.

LONDON, *June* 24, 1881.

XIII.

LOSS AND GAIN IN RECENT THEOLOGY.

DEAR FRIENDS AND YOUNGER BROTHERS,

IN a rash moment crowded with affectionate memories of your College days, I promised to speak to you to-night: as if it were possible for us to cancel the intervening years and meet again as the Students' class around the Professor's chair. Once, no doubt, it was my right and duty to teach you, and offer some guidance to your thought and conscience: and the successive relations thus established during more than four decades of this century form for me golden links of an experience unspeakably precious. But when you come back to me with heads now grey,—nay, father and son together,—pastors of great churches, familiar with public life, and bearing well-earned honours in science or literature, what can I say that you have not thought? whither move, without finding you there before me? from what danger guard you that you have not already shunned? It is but a little truth that one hand can grasp,—perhaps a few seeds that may try their chance to grow. I opened all I had to you: and whether they withered or lived, whether they yielded tares or wheat, you alone can tell, who are in the warm rich summer of life. We freely gave you our ideas of things human and Divine: and now, could I choose, I would fain hear from you the lesson of lessons, viz., how they stand the test of working experience; whether they can look reality in the face and even make it glow "as the face of an angel"; whether they can nerve

the tempted will, and sweeten the tried temper, and blend a music with the sorrows of humanity. Instead of this, however, you ask me to tell you how your life-problem looks from the present point of view,—a point of view which is doubly altered; for all of us, through new lights of thought that have fallen upon the scene; and personally for me, as an old man standing on the verge, and having beneath his eye all that he can here expect to see. Is it true, as we are often told, that our prophetic function is gone, and that the Naturalist is henceforth to take our place as well as his own?—that the divine meanings in human things are all a dream, and we really "live by bread alone," and not by mystic words overheard from God?—that the story of our earthly days is a detected failure, a disenchanted romance, instead of a rudimentary eternity? Has anything recently happened to our nature that we must despair of it? or to the Universe, that its only infinitude is that of Space, without the deeps of any spiritual heaven? Guarding ourselves alike against the obstinacy of old illusions and the levity of new, let us measure, if we can, some of the admitted changes of religious conception since the time when we first studied together; and see whether they snatch our commission from us, or leave us still a gospel to preach, a kingdom of God to bring in, an immortal life to expect.

We have no doubt had much to unlearn in our method of building up and supporting religious faith in others and in ourselves. Instruments of persuasion once ready to our hand have become unavailable. We have overstrained perhaps the search for final causes and made providences out of trifles. Or, we have tried to reach the Creator by dating the beginning of the world; or, to establish a monopoly of Revelation by maligning the great Heathen religions and philosophies; or, to extort a proof of eternal life from the records of Christ's resurrection. In the first humiliation of such mistakes, it is natural to feel helpless and disarmed. But are we then reduced to silence, because we have once spoken foolishly for God? The everlasting realities take

no notice of our false logic, but hold their course, to meet us when we no longer mistake their track. How the momentary loss may turn to a permanent gain, may be best seen if we concentrate our attention on one or two leading and recent instances of superseded theological beliefs.

I. Consider, first, the total disappearance, from our branch of the Reformed Churches, of all *External Authority* in matters of Religion. The Catholic prediction, so often made when Luther threw off the restraints of ecclesiastical Tradition, has at last come true; and the yoke of the Bible follows the yoke of the Church. The phrases which we have heard repeated with enthusiasm,—that "the Bible, and the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants,"—that "Scripture is the Rule of faith and practice,"—are indeed full of historical interest, but for minds at once sincere and exact, have lost their magic power. I need not remind you how innocently, and how inevitably, this has come about; how completely the conception of a *Canonical* literature that shall for ever serve as a Divine statute-book, belongs to a stage of culture which has passed away; how widely discrepant are the types of doctrine and the conceptions of morals and the recitals of fact, in different parts of this supposed uniform manual; and how, if you disown these human inequalities and insist on artificially filling up its valleys and levelling its hills, you destroy a region glorious in beauty, and doom its running waters to stagnate in unwholesome fens. It is simply *a fact* that *dictated* faith and duty are no longer possible, and that, by way of textual oracle, you can carry to the soul no vision of God, no contrition for sin, no sigh for righteousness. The time is past when a doctrine could save itself from criticism by taking refuge under an apostle's word, or a futurity authenticate itself by a prophet's forecast, or a habit become obligatory by evangelical example.

To our function, as witnesses for divine things, this seems at first a disastrous change, little short of a loss of both the credentials and the instructions which legitimate our

message. We naturally think how easy was the preacher's task when he had only to exhibit the sacred seal and make clear the sentences it covered, and the Reason of men would accept them as truth and the Will would bow before them; when doubts of Providence fled from the sufferer at the mere sound of the words, "The hairs of your head are all numbered"; and the shadows of death vanished before the voice, "This mortal must put on immortality"; and the guilty conscience shuddered to hear, "There shall in no wise enter therein anything that is unclean or that maketh abomination and a lie." In our moments of weakness, when we cry, "Ah, Lord God, behold I cannot speak, for I am a child!" we may long for some infallible support which may bear our burden and relieve the strain of thought and love. But it is just in order to bear this burden, to sift out the eternally true and good from transient and tempting semblances, and make the divine light glow amid human things, that we have girded up our wills and set apart our lives for spiritual service. And if there were a book-theology ever so perfect, the verbal quintessence of all transcendent truth, the more we spared our own souls and depended upon it, the less should we pierce to the seats of conviction and re-kindle sight for the blind. Religion is not the truth of any stereotyped propositions, but the highest life of the moving spirit: nor can it be conveyed from mind to mind, except by the vibration of harmonic chords. Even the rigid Scripturalists of Puritan times, at the very moment when they seemed to rest everything on the "Word of God," felt how poor a thing was a faith taken upon trust, and dived down with their truth into the deep waters of human experience, and showed its subtle mingling with the whole element of thought and feeling: so that, with all their Biblical securities, their real power lay in the rich stores of their own inward history, their keen insight into the temptations and passions of mankind, and the secret response of conscience to their lofty claims for Holy Living.

Are we then to despair of our office, because what was once used as a Divine Text-book has become a human literature? On the contrary, I claim it as a noble though severe advantage that we are driven from words to realities, and must sink right home to the inward springs of religion in our nature and experience. The use of knowledge is to take and conform us to the things known; not to look at them, but to live in right relations with them: and we may well bless any change which, withdrawing us from mere reflections of God, centralizes us in God himself; and, silencing formulas of righteousness, makes us organs of its power; and, instead of ideas of immortal life, sets up its very essence and initial stage within us. Will any one tell me that these stupendous spiritual realities can *be*, and leave no marks on the universe they fill?—that it can make no difference to the countenance of nature, whether a Living Mind look through it, or it be as the eyeless mask moulded from a face of the dead?—or, to the aspect of the Moral Law, whether it be the expression of an Infinite Holiness, or only a municipal artifice of human management?—or, to the constitution of our faculties, whether they are on the scale of illimitable growth, or exhaust their possibilities within the term of earthly years? And, if difference it *does* make, thither let us go, and we are in the very audience-chamber,—nay, under the quickening touch, of the Infinite thought and righteousness and love; and, rendered incandescent with them ourselves, shall pass on their fires into other souls. It is the *unwritten* oracles of God that have most deeply stirred the hearts of the devout,—the beauty of the heavens and the earth, the secret heroism of duty, the mystery of sorrow, the solemnity of death; and Scripture itself is only so far the "Word of God," as it truly plants us face to face with these his *silences*. It moves us, because it reads their significance as we read them ourselves, and would speak to us in vain, were not the same faiths and affections already implicitly there. Just as no critic,—be he even infallible,—can show you the majesty

of a statute, the pathos of a poem, the expressiveness of a human face, if you do not intuitively feel it; so can external authority make nothing sacred which does not in itself *find* you and wake up some sleeping piety. Our attitude towards Scripture thus becomes the same which has long been familiar to the Society of Friends; simply assuming that the Spirit of God, which in the old time wrought their elements of sanctity into the pages of the Bible, lives and operates for ever in the human soul, renewing the light of Divine truth, and kindling eternal aspirations: so that the day of Pentecost is never past, and there is still a tongue of fire for every evangelist.

II. And now take the measure of another great change which though gradual and timid in its advance, has for us reached its completion within our own memory,—the disappearance from our faith of the entire *Messianic mythology*. I speak not merely of the lost "argument from prophecy," now melted away by better understanding of the Hebrew writings, or of the interior relation, under any aspect, of the Old Testament and the New; but of the total discharge, from our religious conceptions, of that central Jewish dream which was always asking, "*Art thou He that should come, or look we for another?*" and of all its stage, its drama, and its scenery. It no longer satisfies us to say, that Jesus realized the Divine promise in a sense far transcending the national preconception, and revealed at last the real meaning of the Spirit which spake in Isaiah. Such forced conforming of the Jewish ideal to the Christian facts, by glorifying the one and theorizing on the other, was inevitable to the first disciples, and could not but colour all that they remembered and thought and wrote: and the imagination of Christendom, working with undiscriminating faith on these mixed materials, has drawn upon its walls a series of sacred pictures, from which Art has loved to reproduce whatever is tender and sublime, and which have broken silence in the Divina Comedia, in the Paradise Lost and Regained, in plaintive Passion-music, and the kindling

popular hymn. All this is of intense interest to us as literature, as art, as the past product of devout genius ; nor will I too rigorously question those elements of it which fairly admit of symbolic use in setting forth the truths we really mean aud the affections we deeply feel. But, as objective reality, as a faithful representation of our invisible and ideal universe, it is gone from us ; gone therefore from our interior religion, and become an outside mythology. From the person of Jesus, for instance, everything *official*, attached to him by evangelists or divines, has fallen away : when they put such false robe upon him, they were but leading him to death. The pomp of royal lineage and fulfilled prediction, the prerogatives of King, of Priest, of Judge, the Advent with retinue of angels on the clouds of heaven, are to us mere deforming investitures, misplaced like court-dresses on "the spirits of the just" ; and he is simply the Divine flower of humanity, blossoming after ages of spiritual growth,—the realized possibility of life in God. And if he is *this*, he has no consciously exceptional part to play, but only to *be* what he is, to follow the momentary love, to do and say what the hour may bring, to be quiet under the sorrows which pity and purity incur, and die away in the prayer of inextinguishable trust. And, to see him thus, we go to his native fields and the village homes of Galilee, and the roads of Samaria, and the streets and courts of Jerusalem, where the griefs and wrongs of his time bruised him and brought out the sublime fragrance of his spirit. All that has been added to that real historic scene,—the angels that hang around his birth, and the fiend that tempts his youth ; the dignities that await his future,—the throne, the trumpet, the great assize, the bar of judgment ; with all the apocalyptic splendours and terrors that ensue, Hades and the Crystal sea, Paradise and the Infernal gulf ; nay, the very boundary-walls of the cosmic panorama that contains these things,—have for us utterly melted away, and left us amid the infinite space and silent stars. What painter among us dares now to put upon his canvas the

scene in which "before him are gathered all nations"? or, like the old masters, represent "the dead in Christ who rise first"? Such pictorial subjects occupy indeed a curious position; too far from our serious belief to be treated earnestly; too near to it to be delivered over to the play of artistic fancy, like the incidents of the classical Olympus.

Where then do we stand, on the dissolution of these scenic dreams? Is their fading away a mere loss, abandoning us to a desolate negation? When you think most reverently of Christ, when you most lose yourself in God, when you are clearest in immortal hope, do you wish them back again? Would they overfill, or would they disappoint, the measures of your spirit in such hours? May we not say that the more the Divine life awakes within us, the less do we ask, and the less can we bear, that its infinite objects and elements should be rendered finite by being brought into the plane of Perception? It is only in the rudimentary stages of piety that men crave tangible objects or feigned pictures on which to fasten their wonder and veneration. The perennial fountains of Religion lie in the deepest wells of our nature, in the primary essence of the Reason and the Moral consciousness: but, to suit the ease of "the natural man," there is a constant tendency in more superficial faculties to take possession of it as it rises and treat it as their own. Imagination is delighted with it, mistakes its character, and plays with it perilous experiments of colour and of form; which at last tempt the Senses themselves to claim it and set it fast in some "graven image which shall not be moved." Invert this order of degeneracy, and you recover the purity and reality of faith. Iconoclasm has already dispossessed the Senses: the perishing of Mythology is fast bringing Imagination to repentance and inducing it to lower its sceptre; and we reach the ultimate simplicity of Christ,—"the Spirit which beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

Is, then, the power of things invisible destroyed, when they can no longer be treated as if visible? Do we not "walk by *Faith* and not by *Sight*"? And is not Imagination essentially "Sight,"—mere vision with shut eyes? It can never supply anything to Faith except a perishable drapery: and if we are to have a religion which "neither moth nor rust doth corrupt," we must "lay up our treasure in the heaven" of *the spirit*, not in earthly folds, however graceful, of the sensuous fancy. There is something suicidal in the scene-painting of apocalyptic belief. It is the effort of men's lower mind to draw down objects infinite and eternal within the grasp of their representative faculty, the rebellion of Wonder against its own baffling limits, its resolve to *force* an answer to its own questions, a relief to its own amazement and suspense. The resolve fulfils its own aim: the answer is *self-created:* the relief is gained: the blank is filled: the required scenery appears and settles into determinate forms: and then the Wonder sinks away, and with it the Religion dies. When we are called of God to plunge and float in His illimitable sea, what can be more miserable than forthwith to escape and land on some broken spar of mythology or dogma?

The devout trusts and habits of the soul, in which the pure religious life consists are conscious of their own conditions, and ask no help from sense or fancy. "Blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed"; who, knowing that "spiritual things are spiritually discerned," pine for no brilliant phantasms, but can "pour forth their song in the night," and to whose thought and love, just as to God himself, "the darkness shineth as the light." What is Divine in the world and in ourselves is precisely what lives behind and within all appearances; and the assurance of it becomes intense in proportion as outward conditions dissolve like shadows before us, and leave us alone at the inner focus of reality. It is with closed eyes that we best commune with the Father of spirits, and "enter the secret place of the Most High." None the less

solemnly does Conscience make us "sure that our sin will find us out," because we have no vision of the hour and the scene of our inevitable shame. And when Death snatches from our side the attendant angels of our life, guides and companions of our way, with their wisdom not half exhausted and the wonders of their love only just begun, are we not as certain that they are made for more than these fragmentary years, as if the landscape were before us of the everlasting hills? For my part, I put no faith in scenic religion, and look upon the modern ritualistic return to it as an unfailing mark of inward decay. It is a puerility, or a mockery, to offer it as help in temptation or peace in sorrow. If the immediate pleading of God in our conscience is of no avail, the visionary fires of future torment will glare upon us in vain. And as for our dear departed ones, if we cannot surrender them to the environing infinitude as to the protecting arms of God, it will hardly be more congenial to let them go into any pearl-gated City of the Redeemed. The closer we keep to the simplicity of human life, the meanings of human experience, the depth of human duty and affections, the nearer shall we stand to God as well as man, and the less, from our station on earth, feel ourselves cut off from heaven. In youth, if ever we receive a "*Serious Call*," it is *the most elementary* religious truths by which the mind becomes entranced. Who can ever forget the intense and lofty years when first the real communion of the Living God,—the same God that received the cries of Gethsemane and Calvary,—and the Sanctity of the inward Law, and the sublime contents of life on both sides of death, broke in a flood of glory upon his mind, and spread the world before him, stripped of his surface-illusions and with its diviner essence cleared? The restless intellect of midlife may toss these things about in speculation, may add to them or take from them, or weave them into the artificial texture of a system. But in old age, as the end draws near, we repose again on these simple truths and trusts,

only with a fuller inward witness and more spiritual calm. And so, the evening light is as the morning's, and sheds once more the tenderest beauty on the world.

Are we then to warn off Imagination from the sacred precincts and, on account of its illusions, allow it *no* entrance into the religious life? This would indeed be absurd: as well might we propose to dispense with eye-sight, because the blind can have no falsely-coloured dreams. It is precisely in the sphere of religion that imagination, everywhere essential alike to intellect and to affection, exercises its most glorious rights. But, in order to guard these rights, we must define their limits,—perhaps thus:—the function of the imagination is to decipher *the real though invisible*, and not to set up *the unreal by exhibiting it as visible.* It finds for us all the hidden truth of which the physical world supplies only the *symbols* to the eye,—the power behind all phenomena, the meaning of every expressive face, the feeling within every tone, the secret spring of every character. It reproduces for us the figures of the past, the theatre of their history, and the passions that move them across the stage. It is the fountain of sympathy, by carrying us to the heart of joys and sorrows other than our own; and of hope, by showing lights of possibility beyond the darkness of the actual. And according as the Gospels are interpreted without or with its aid, the person of "the Son of Man" emerges as that of a Jewish compound of enthusiast and charlatan, or as the Head of a divine humanity. In the support which it affords to spiritual apprehension, it reads the finite into the infinite: its action is expansive; and its result, an ascent into immeasurable truth. But in the invention of a mythology it reads the infinite into the finite; its action is contractile; and its result a descent into puerile fable.

But I must hasten to my last word. I have spoken of changes of thought since first we studied together: what is the sum of them? That they discharge the ingenuities of

schoolmen and dreamers, and re-deliver us to the intuitions and pieties of our nature; by his identification with which it is that Christ wins us as his disciples and makes us one with himself and God. Herein lies the security and, under faithful administration, the intrinsic nobleness of your function, which is nothing else than to represent and work out this inward, spiritual, divine, and perfectible side of human life, and uphold its authority over all that is merely outward, temporal, and animal. Religion is reproached with not being *progressive:* it makes amends by being *imperishable.* The enduring element in our humanity is not in the doctrines which we consciously elaborate, but in the faiths which unconsciously dispose of us, and never slumber but to wake again. What treatise on sin, what philosophy of retribution, is as fresh as the fifty-first Psalm? What scientific theory has lasted like the Lord's Prayer? If it is an evidence of *movement* that, in a library, no books become sooner obsolete than books of science, it is no less a mark of *stability* that poetry and religious literature survive, and even ultimate philosophies seldom die but to rise again. These, and with them the kindred services of devotion, are the expression of aspirations and faiths which for ever cry out for interpreters and guides. And in proportion as you carry your appeal to these deepest seats of our nature, you not only reach the firmest ground, but also touch accordant notes in every heart; so that the response turns out a harmony. Say what we may about the dissensions of Christendom, I yet affirm that Religion in its very essence, and the religion of Christ in the most absolute degree, is a bond of human union tenacious in itself, and increasing the tenacity of every other. It is always the self-assertion of intellect and will that divides us: it is the self-forgetfulness of love and reverence that unites us: and never can we *so* pass out of our own hands as when we lose ourselves in God: to be one with Him is to be one with each other. There are two sides to human life; one, towards the kingdom of

nature; the other, towards the kingdom of God. To the former belong all the secular competitions, the strife of opinion, the self-regarding efforts, the passions of party, the conflicts of war, which keep the world in a ferment of ambitions, and make it the prize of victorious capacity. To the latter belong all the blending affections, the common admirations, the subduing pieties, the enthusiasms for the true, the just, the holy, by which life is sweetened and purified, and healing brought to its sorrows and peace to its storms. In the rivalry between the two, rude voices proclaim the triumph of the *energies;* but Christ steps forth and pronounces the *beatitudes.* That winning voice has brought you to his side. You have accepted from him a function which is not *pre-occupied* by the eager partizans of separate interest or opinion, *not* superseded by the journal or the platform; viz., to become the organ of far deeper faith than opinion, of hope that is never clouded, of charity that conquers ill; to intensify the hunger and thirst after righteousness; to open the dull eye of the spirit to the beauty and graces hid beneath the plain face of life; and reverently watch over that purity of heart which alone can see God. In this service of Divine ends, be not dismayed by the seeming scorn of heedless men: could you look behind that screen, you would find that in their remoter soul you have an eternal Advocate, "the spirit of truth that cometh from the Father." Whoever will deal with realities must often disbelieve appearances: else how should he ever suspect that, beneath the driving waves and angry surge of human passions, the same waters, through miles of depth, lie tranquil in their bed? The harmonizing element in the soul is infinitely vaster and more enduring than the discordant: only it remains latent till you absolutely believe in it and live in it. But you will soon meet it and learn to trust it, when once you dare to speak to what is least visible in human character, yet most surely witnessed in your heart of hearts.

Dear Friends and Brothers, if it is well, in this work of

ours, to begin with the Heathen idea of perfection and *know ourselves*, it is indispensable to go on to the Christian and *forget ourselves*. Here lies the secret of spiritual power. Our own brief experience, as well as all Christian history, attests this. When I look back over the two generations that are clear to me in memory or in record, and, among the inevitable varieties of worth, notice the figures and features that survive in thought, the differences are full of pathetic lights and shades. The vain and empty are simply gone without a trace, their egoism melted into nothingness. The hard and opinionative are remembered indeed, and with homage to their integrity; but remembered with a smile, as belonging to the past; or, if more, only on account of some redeeming enthusiasm or tenderness which hinted a suppressed fire within. But the forms that are still radiant, the eyes that have not lost their glow and are still as if near to us in the distant air, are those of loving and trustful disciples, surrendered to faithful service, and spending in it, with childlike simplicity, the gifts of genius or the affluence of culture. Your own hearts will testify that it is no mere personal accident if Channing, inspirer of my youth, and John James Tayler, the friend of my full age, live before me among the dearest and most sacred figures of my past, and of my future. It is their purity of soul, their constancy in duty, their tenderness of affection, their life in God, that joins them to the train of Christ, and mingles them with the lengthening procession of the saints. Their work is in your hands: may the grace and power of their spirit be continued in your hearts!

PRAYER.

God of our life! who abidest for ever, but appointest the ages to carry us away as with a flood! we would pass into thy hand and rest in thee. Our wishes are blind: thy wisdom is infinite: we trust thy mercy alike, whether thou make our time short, or allot to us length of days. Our only prayer shall be that, morning or evening, in the light or in the shadows, we may be moulded to thy perfect will.

O Spirit of grace, whose witness appeareth in the lives of the righteous, and is hid in the secret places of all hearts! clear our vision to read it truly, and waken our courage to declare it faithfully. Rising above all proud thoughts and selfish aims and unloving temper, may we dedicate ourselves to thee in the meekness and simplicity of Christ. Sanctify every soul that seeks thee here; and send us to our remaining work with chastened desires, with truer diligence, and more devoted fidelity. Living or dying, here or there, still join us in love to each other and to thee. Amen.

OCCASIONAL SERMONS, &c.

VIEWS OF THE WORLD FROM HALLEY'S COMET.

TO THE

CONGREGATION OF PROTESTANT DISSENTERS

ASSEMBLING IN

PARADISE STREET CHAPEL, LIVERPOOL,

TO ACCOMPANY AND AID WHOSE CHRISTIAN PROGRESS IN THE

EXERCISE OF A FREE MIND,

THE PRACTICE OF A PURE MORALITY,

AND THE SENTIMENTS OF A LOFTY DEVOTION,

IS THE AUTHOR'S DUTY AND DESIRE,

THIS DISCOURSE, PREPARED IN THEIR SERVICE,

IS INSCRIBED

BY THEIR AFFECTIONATE FRIEND AND FELLOW-WORSHIPPER,

JAMES MARTINEAU.

VIEWS OF THE WORLD FROM HALLEY'S COMET.*

"Lift up your eyes on high, and behold, who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number; he calleth them all by their names, by the greatness of his might, for that He is strong in power; not one faileth."—ISAIAH xl. 26.

AMONG those conjunctions of ideas which have appeared in all nations and at all times, none has imprinted itself more distinctly on the imagination and language of mankind, than the association of the visible heavens with the conception of Deity. Most of the departments of human knowledge have had their origin in the physical necessities of man; but astronomy has sprung, in part at least, from his want of a religion. With the elder nations of the world, the priest of the Divinity was the priest of Nature too, and interpreted in the same breath the will of Providence and the courses of the stars: the temple by day was an observatory by night; the catacombs of the dead had passages pointing to the northern pole;[1] and between the vicissitudes of earth and the revolutions of the skies was imagined a mystic sympathy, enabling the wise to read the fates of nations, in the silent language of those moving lights. Under the serene heavens of Asia and of Egypt, Science and Adoration entered the world together,—twin births of midnight!

There is nothing surprising in this association of Religion with Astronomy. The affinity between the material

* Paradise Street Chapel, Liverpool, September 27, 1835.

and the moral sublime is close and natural; and the scenery of night, witnessed in silence and answering the observer's gaze with the glance of a thousand eyes travelling through the immeasurable distance,—the silence so like death,—the movement so like life, might well oppress the soul with the sense of mystery, and dissolve thought into veneration. The two ideas which are the chief elements in the conception of Deity are irresistibly forced upon the mind by a nocturnal sky;—the notions of unlimited space, and of indefinite time. What fitter dwelling for the great Ruler of human things, than that expanse in which the earth is hung? What more durable palace for the Eternal, than the firmament, whose fires have lighted unnumbered generations to the tomb, and seem destined to burn on undimmed when man and his works may be no more? Nor was it wholly unnatural to dream of a possible connection between the stars and the future,—the mysterious in space and the mysterious in time. The only visible objects which travel into the cycles of the future, and whose movements are so regular as to symbolize the inexorability of fate, they might well be supposed cognizant of the secrets of destiny, and thought to exhibit to the initiated the sacred cipher of prophecy.

Experience has dissipated the errors of this venerable faith. A more manly homage is now rendered to the wonders of the skies,—the homage, not of ignorance to its own dreams, but of knowledge to intelligible and magnificent order. The better study of cause and effect has broken the fancied ties of fate between the celestial and sublunary spheres; and human affairs are understood to pursue their course in the order of moral causation, without witness or revealer in the heavens, except that eye and word of Providence which looks, and bids that all be well. While the heavenly bodies roll on, in conformity with the laws which regulate material systems, the events which make up the history of man are evolved from the energy of human reason and passion, and can be predicted only from a know-

ledge of the human will. Though, however, the heavens have no control over the progress of human affairs, their mighty periods enable us to measure it; though they suggest not the same ideas of our own nature and of God, which presented themselves to the sages of old, they may suggest other and better, and be teachers still of faith and hope. At least, I either find, or fancy, a fit occasion in the recent appearance of a Comet, in precise accordance with astronomical anticipation, to present to you a few thoughts, on the prospects which Providence opens to society and the individual mind. It is impossible for even an uncultivated intellect to regard with indifference the most distinguished celestial phenomenon of our times: and there are circumstances connected with it, which suggest reflections of no common interest. The star in question belongs to a set of bodies, which were long held to be exceptions to the symmetry and even to the benevolence of nature,—to be wandering curses, subject to no law, and let slip to blight the beauty of creation. It is the first of its class whose periodical revolution was discovered, and which verified a prediction of its punctual return. It appears only after intervals of seventy-five years,—so that Halley, the philosopher, who first defined its orbit, and foretold its approach, was gone from the world, when it fulfilled his announcement. The present is but the second of its anticipated appearances; and it comes into the vicinity of the sun from beyond the cold confines of the solar system.

The arrival of this body may mark to our minds the progress of society. Civilization is too slow-paced to be calculable by our common years; it moves by generations; it is measured by cycles; it steps from century to century. Its advance, imperceptible day by day, becomes appreciable to the mind that sweeps over a vast reach of duration, and compares together remote points of history. The cometary year is no unfit auxiliary to this process of comparison. It presents to society a species of anniversary, which should not be allowed to pass without self-examination; its

successive returns may be used as a series of signal-posts, raised on the great plain of time, from each of which the eye can take the survey to the preceding, till all vision is lost in the obscurity of antiquity. One who should visit the world with the comet would witness phenomena cheering to his faith in Providence.

Six of its years ago,[2] Europe was immersed in an intellectual darkness almost total. Amid the gloom, priestcraft celebrated its carnival, and played its most "fantastic tricks before High Heaven." Religion was the only good influence operating on the soul of society; and that was no longer the inspiration of God upon the heart, but the pressure of priests upon the will: no longer a principle of love, but the power of fear. Art had given no impulse to human ingenuity: and commerce, except in two or three cities of Italy, brought no contributions even to external and physical civilization. Force and superstition were the only preservers of social order. Almost the only method by which genius could pour its ideas and sentiments into the popular mind, was by the recent, or recently revived,[3] invention of oil-painting,—the divine art, which at its birth was consecrated to religion, and brought before the eye of unlettered multitudes the grace and pathos of Scripture story, and enshrined in rude hearts the love of purity and the aspirations of holiness, under the images of Mary and of Christ. Amid the sleep of the general mind,[4] a promise, indeed, of better days had arisen. The writers of Greece and Rome had just been rescued from a long oblivion;[5] but it was only by an indirect and circuitous influence, by furnishing the impulse to the production of national and popular literature, that their recovery could act on the great mass of men. After a long polar winter of the mind, the brilliant orb of ancient learning had arisen on the summits of society, and began to melt the snows which had frozen its genius; but the valleys still lay beneath the night, and were unvisited yet by the descending streams of thought, that were to clothe the wilderness with fertility.

Suppose another cycle gone, and our eye turned again upon the world.[6] All darkness still; fear, and strife, and bloodshed walk the earth in melancholy triumph. The labourers of Providence in the peaceful arts of civilization seem fewer and more dispirited than before. But in the obscurity of a German city, an instrument is seen, of little note indeed, and power undeveloped, but great significance; in which the spirit of foresight perceives that Providence was never more beneficent, and humanity never on the eve of a mightier career. The implements of Printing are at work.[7]

When the periodic visitant returns again[8] to look upon the earth, the face of all things is changed. For itself, *it* is not likely to lurk any longer unnoticed in the heavens, and glide through its course unrecognized; for Copernicus[9] is there to gaze; and Algebra, a new instrument of unrivalled power in the scientific interpretation of nature, is already in men's hands.[10] There is a perceptible accession of refinement to the hearts, and dignity to the minds of men; for they have held converse with the creations of poetry and art;[11] the genius of Italy has converted a material into an ideal existence, and visited them with the perceptions of beauty, and aspirations after better life. The thraldom of fear upon the passions is relieved by the sentiment of intellectual admiration, and the impulses of moral sympathy. Above all, the consolidated tyranny of Rome is cleft in twain; and though it has been truly said of the Reformation, that it gave to the human mind many lords instead of one, still it is something to have a choice of masters; and by that species of infinite division to which Protestant intolerance tends, despotism becomes attenuated into liberty, and fanaticism must be starved for want of sympathy. The fatal spell of Pontifical Tradition was broken. The book of life was open before the eyes of men; and however their ignorance may misunderstand, and their passions pervert its meaning, it teaches too variously, by parable and precept, by model

and by miracle, the infinite paternity of God, the universality of his Providence, and the equal and immortal relation of all men to him, not to drive away the fierce fancies of bigotry at last, and sublime the devotion, while it refines the morality of the world. True it is, that within the very generation of which I speak, one of the most malignant acts of intolerance was committed: Calvin, after himself rejecting the doctrine of Transubstantiation, *one* of the twin mysteries of Rome, burnt Servetus as a heretic, for rejecting the Trinity, which was *the other*.[12] But in the meanwhile, so long as persecution should disgrace the annals of the old world, a refuge was not inaccessible; for America had been opened to human enterprise, and was destined to become the asylum of oppressed religion, the forest nurse of infant liberty.[13]

It was not to be expected, that succeeding epochs should be marked by such extraordinary strides of improvement, such an eager crowd of civilizing causes, as this memorable period displayed. Time was needed for the development of their natural effects; and in these effects, whether we look to the creation of great individual minds, or to the silent amelioration of institutions, and the diffusion of a more intelligent social spirit, there is nothing to disappoint, or to let down our rising faith in the progress of Christian communities. At the expiration of the next seventy-five years, Bacon had made his gigantic survey of creation, and traced a high road of discovery through its most difficult defiles; Galileo had invented the Telescope,—that magic eye wherewith to read the luminous lessons of the firmanent,—and had brought to the shrine of science the four moons of the Planet Jupiter,—a coronet of gems, offered in gratitude for her gift of this new sense; and Shakspeare had enriched the world with the marvellous creations of his genius,—in which life will receive illustration, and man will see his image to the end of time.[14]

Another interval; and the wandering luminary returned

just time enough to be the torch which followed Milton to his grave, and led on the philosophy of Newton to its modest throne. Locke too was at that moment busy with the human mind, engaged in such researches into its capabilities and weaknesses, into the source of its fallacies, and its means of attaining truth, as must inevitably cut up the strength of intolerance by the roots, banish from society the mischievous confusion between guilt which resides in the will, and error which belongs to the understanding, and prepare the way for that spirit of serene and dignified charity, which Christianity itself can never produce, except in combination with a knowledge of human nature.[15]

It was inevitable that the improvement of society should now[16] assume a less imposing form. Providence appears to forbid the ascendency of solitary genius for many generations in succession. The vastness of its onward bound distances immediate pursuit; a pause must be allowed for humbler minds to overtake the position it has seized. In science, the truth to which it darts with almost the ease of intuition, others must reach by the steady march of labouring reason, over the successive steps of evidence. To climb the eminence which it gains would render ordinary faculties dizzy, did they not palpably feel how firm the footing at every stage, and accustom their vision to the prospect as it grows. Accordingly, the age of discovery is naturally followed by one of circumspection. After so fleet a transportation through scenes of various wonder and magnificence, knowledge sits down to make up its journal, and reduce to order its tumult of impressions. And in poetry and art, the first effect of productions of the highest order, is to overawe all neighbouring minds; the last to inspire them with kindred creative power. They exhaust for a while all the perceptions of beauty; and time must be allowed for new ideas and perceptions to arise, for new types of thought and character to be struck out, before any rival excellence can rise up. The higher kinds of merit being preoccupied, mechanical and material, rather than

ideal excellence, is for a time the only superiority which is attainable. The desire, moreover, arises to dwell on the emotions of admiration, to recur to them in cooler moments, and trace them to their source. Hence it is not surprising that, in the next period, Milton should be replaced by Pope; for the successor of genius is precision; and criticism follows production. The social amelioration, however, was no less real for being less conspicuous. The great conquests of Newton were not ingloriously followed up.[17] Handel found for Scripture a voice most heavenly. The pure-minded and accomplished Berkeley broke into speculations which opened a new era of opinion, and stamped on the succeeding age some of the most striking of its intellectual features.[18]

We stand ourselves at one extremity of that age;[19] and unless we are deceived by the nearness of our view, and see what at the distance of a cometary year would vanish into nothing, never, in any of its former returns, had the causes of social progression acquired such strength and organization. The shadows of gigantic changes have swept the earth; the forms themselves approach; their footsteps are already on the ear. It is not indeed to be denied, that in the recent history of civilization, there are some passages dark and terrible: and in the present state of knowledge, some things disappointing to minds that have conversed lovingly with the master spirits of an earlier age. Physical science has been accused of positive decline; and in morals and religion there has been a fearful convulsion of opinions, at which alarmists tremble. The two phenomena are intimately connected; and conjointly are but a passing symptom of the greatest of all revolutions, the diffusion of knowledge, thought and emotion before concentrated,—the elevation of the great mass of men to a position of greater dignity, and a feeling of more healthy self-respect. It may be true that the material creation is not studied now in the temper of Boyle and Newton; that the vulgar demand of immediate utility may have let down the lofty

and reverent enthusiasm, with which those elder spirits aspired to learn; that we have found a place of traffic in that science of nature, which to them was a house of prayer,—a fresh-opened temple, whose gates they passed with awe, and in whose courts they bowed their heads to listen to the faintest oracle. Yet even of natural knowledge, the names of Davy and of Werner remind us of two lagging departments, chemistry and geology, which have been triumphantly brought up. And the generous zeal which has declined in one direction has burst forth in another. Inquiry has ascended from the natural to the moral world; man has retired within himself, to study his own faculties, to sift his opinions, to analyse his sentiments of moral obligation, to contemplate his relations to his fellows and to God. True it is, that under the guidance of Voltaire and Hume, this process issued for a time in a spread of scepticism, startling enough to those who see in religion an indispensable element of social improvement. In removing the spell of superstition, they withdrew the charter of hope. These great disenchanters of reason, in exorcizing human fanaticism, cast out human faith. But the purer of the two spirits, weary of "wandering through dry places," will return, disengaged from the unclean: and "bringing with it other spirits" as heavenly as itself, will enter its abode again, and "find it swept and garnished." "The last state of that" mind is better "than the first." The breaking up of creeds and forms is the mark of a period of social transition,—the preparation, on which wise and trustful men will look with calmness, for some new faith, not less fervent and more enlightened. It is the needful fusing of old material, ere thought is poured into new moulds, and comes out in diviner forms. Led in another direction by one of the profoundest of philosophers, Adam Smith, society has turned to the study of itself. And that science, of which he was the creator, has already done too much in softening the jealousies of nations, in rebuking the selfishness of class, in exciting sympathy for the well-being of the

industrious many, not to give good hope, from its co-operation with higher causes, for the peace of communities, and the civilization of the world. It is the character of all the changes in our recent history, that they have favourably affected the condition of the great body of the population;—have extended improvement from the few to the many, and brought the meditations of the thinker and the philanthropist to bear on the intelligence and character of millions. Few now are without the consciousness of a mental and moral existence. And though that benevolence must be paltry, which can look with satisfied complacency at the present state of the public mind and character,—at the present amount of education and aspect of religion, yet there is ground for gratulation, that the instruments of improvement are in our hands, and the aspirations of society still turned towards better things. Even the feelings awakened by the present astronomical phenomenon afford indications of favourable change. At its last appearance, and still more in remoter times, it was contemplated with terrified superstition, deprecated with prayer and penance, and greeted as the flying scourge of anger, and forerunner of doom. Now it is met with tranquil expectation. Better notions of the Creator, and a firmer trust in his paternity prevail. Portions of his universe like this, whose office we cannot understand, are thought more likely to exercise functions of benevolence, than of judgment: and His is felt to be the Providence of a Protecting, rather than an Avenging God. From the recurrence of this period, then, may we not take occasion to augur well of the destinies of the world? As in our pilgrimage of observation it plants our foot on age after age, we feel *that we ascend:* and as we stand aloft on our present stage of history, and look forth into the shadows of coming years,—to suffer the imagination to people them with brilliant creations, and discern amid the darkness a land of better promise, is no dream of disordered enthusiasm, but the just vaticination of a good heart.

This event is not only a testimony to the advancement of mankind collectively, but an assurance, or at least a suggestion not wholly worthless, in corroboration of the voice of Christian promise, of the individual immortality of man. Look only at the comparative duration of this comet, and of our mortal existence. One of its years exceeds the whole length of human life: the men who witness one of its visits, have taken their departure when it comes again: and on it rolls, cycle after cycle, their span of life mocked by its durability. And yet one of these short-lived minds could place itself in the temple of science; and catching only a little glimpse, a few faint hints, of its orbit, rise up and prophesy its course eternally. Nay more, he could make it tell the secrets of those invisible spaces into which it plunges, and bring back tidings, whether there be other planets beyond the known limits of our system.[20] He could tell the place, the year, the month of its return. And yet, when it comes to do honour to his intellect by its exactitude, it looks down upon his quiet grave, and his children only share the triumph! Is this credible in the government of God? Shall the material thing, inorganic, inert, impercipient,—move on in this wondrous perpetuity; and shall the soul, which discerns its order, and tracks its career, and detects its laws, and admires its lustre, and speculates on its constitution, be swept away as nothing before it? Shall unconscious matter last, while the mind, to which alone its functions are subservient, which interprets its mysteries, and reads in them the signature of God, vanish like the passing wind? Shall the works and discoveries of intelligence survive itself, and while the toil is its own, shall the reward be for its successors? Shall the knowledge and the thoughts of men be handed down in endless genealogy, teaching and inspiring the soul of other times, and shall the conscious being which created them be blotted ignominiously from creation! Impossible! it cannot be but that Halley and Newton, through the medium of whose thought we now gaze at the skies, witness elsewhere the excellence of their

past toils, the triumphs of their studious meditations. Surely the heavens which they deciphered they behold, with eyes undimmed by age, and minds yet yearning, but in a spirit of profounder adoration, to press forward towards vaster disclosures of the infinitude of God.

And if we may be permitted to imagine what sentiment they would address to us, could we but hear their friendly voice, perchance they would bid us learn a lesson of Providence from their experience. They might say: "Behold the infinite fidelity of God! Amid the seeming lawlessness of this star, once deemed the offspring of Divine caprice, an inflexible order, a fair symmetry, an entire absence of fortuity prevail. Be assured, thus faithful and immutable is the Eternal in his administration of the moral world; thus inexorable the connection of effect and cause within the soul of man; thus certainly, despite all apparent confusion, will the Providence of humanity fulfil its cycle of mystic but blessed fates. Fear nothing, hope nothing, from chance and change within the circuit of his sway. In your aspirations after well-being study the laws of Duty. Changeless as the tie which binds the planets to their orbits, or the ocean to the shore, is the decree of the world of spirits, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that also shall he reap."

NOTES.

[1] In the great pyramid, called the pyramid of Cheops, the exit from the chamber containing the sarcophagus is by a passage to the North, ascending at an angle of 26° to the horizon. Twenty-six degrees being the latitude of the building, the passage evidently points to the pole. The same construction is found in the smaller pyramids.—*See* "Belzoni's Researches in Egypt and Nubia," Vol. I. p. 416.

[2] A.D. 1380—A.D. 1456.

[3] Vasari, in his "History of the Lives of the most excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects," ascribes the invention of oil-painting to John Van Eyck, of Bruges, who was born in 1369. This painter, however, appears to deserve only the humbler honour of reviving the art; as, in the opinion of the most competent judges, Mr. Raspe has shown that it was practised ages before Van Eyck was born.—*See* Sir Joshua Reynolds' "Journey to Flanders and Holland." *Bruges.*

[4] Those who remember that before the era of which I speak, Dante had lived and died (1321), that his immortal poem was honoured throughout Italy, and that in Milan, Bologna, and Florence, professors had been established for the sole purpose of expounding it, may think the foregoing estimate of the intellectual condition of Europe in the fourteenth century too low. But the kind of intoxicated admiration which the Divina Commedia excited, really proves how far Dante was raised above his contemporaries and successors, and how little he can be taken as a measure of the mental advancement of his age. To venerate is not necessarily to appreciate. "Les Commentaires," says M. Sismondi, "qu'on nous a donnés sur le Dante fournissent une nouvelle preuve de la supériorité de ce grand homme; on y voit avec étonnement ses admirateurs à gages, incapables d'apprécier sa vraie grandeur." "Le grand savoir du Dante a aussi excité l'admiration de ses commentateurs; et, en effet, le poète paraît avoir réuni toutes les connaissances qui ornaient son siècle; son livre en est le dépôt; il indique assez exactement jusqu'où était parvenue la science; il montre aussi combien elle avait encore de chemin à faire pour satisfaire l'esprit." —"Sismondi's Littérature du midi de l'Europe," Vol. I. p. 395.

[5] Petrarch, to whose zeal Europe was greatly indebted for the re-

vived attention to classical literature, and the discovery of many of its remains, died in 1374.

[6] A.D. 1456–1531.

[7] Printing, that is, by movable metal types; the first use of which constitutes the true date of the invention of the press. They were introduced by Fust, Schöfer and Guttenberg at Mentz; and their first application was to the printing of the Mazarine Bible, between 1450 and 1455. If, as there seems some reason to believe, the types used in this work were cut by hand, the first complete separation of the arts of engraving and printing, took place in 1462, when the Mentz Bible, unquestionably executed by cast types, issued from the press. Engraved blocks of wood had been long in use; as far back as the early part of the fourteenth century in the manufacture of playing cards, and more recently in multiplying copies of certain rude drawings of saints, with a quantity of explanatory text.—*See* "Hallam's Middle Ages," Chap. IX. part 2.

[8] A.D. 1531.

[9] He was born at Thorn in Prussia, in 1473; and died in 1543. The work in which he explained the apparent motions of the heavenly bodies by a rotation of the earth on its axis, conjoined with an annual revolution round the sun, was put into his hands a few hours before his death. He is described by Kepler as "a man of great genius, and what is of great moment in these matters, of a free mind." Prefatio ad Paulum III. Pontif. max.

[10] Notwithstanding some faint traces of an earlier existence, both in Germany and Italy, Algebra must be regarded as having been introduced for the first time to the knowledge of Europeans in general, by Lucas de Burgo in a work published at Venice in 1494.

[11] It was the brilliant period when Michael Angelo, Titian, Correggio and Ariosto were still living, and the works of Giorgione and Raffaele still fresh.

[12] This memorable crime was perpetrated in 1553. It was an act of disinterested theological aversion; in holy zeal for the truth, the reformer was willing to serve the Trinity by the sacrifice of all the scruples of honour, and relentings of humanity. Servetus was neither countryman, nor ecclesiastical rival, nor heretical neighbour of Calvin; but an Arragonese by descent, a physician by profession, and a French subject by settlement. Through the influence of his former fellow-student and correspondent Calvin, he was thrown into prison in France. Passing through Geneva, on an intended journey to Naples, he was arrested on Sunday, August 19, 1553, by the vigilant exercise of the same influence; Calvin's servant, with singular meanness, was put forward as the accuser; Calvin himself furnished in evidence, on the trial, papers which had been confidentially submitted to him for

his opinion by the accused. Servetus complained of having been left without the most necessary comforts of clothing in a dungeon, the damp and intolerable loathsomeness of which were destroying him; and his remonstrances were treated with contempt. He petitioned, as a foreigner, to be allowed the advantage of an advocate; and he was told that he wanted none, for he himself was a perfect adept in the art of lying. A proposal was made by one of his more compassionate judges, to remove the trial to another court, the supreme council of the Two Hundred; Calvin, enraged at this attempt "to free the wretch from punishment," by transferring the case from an ecclesiastical to a civil tribunal, stifled it at once. "What a glorious reformation," says Mr. Robinson, "had been wrought at Geneva, when the proof of a man's Christianity lay in his humbly requesting the magistrate to burn a foreign gentleman, over whom they had no jurisdiction, for the honour of God and his eminent servant, Mr. Calvin!" Throughout this transaction the claim, so seldom disallowed by civilized communities, of the stranger and the passer-by, to the offices of common humanity, seems not for one moment to have been felt. But intolerance has no such local prejudices; it has no country; its hate is universal. During the proceedings, Calvin wrote to Farel, "I hope Servetus will be condemned to death; but I wish that the severity of his punishment may be mitigated.' It would have been fortunate for the memory of the reformer, had this language less closely resembled the smooth speeches, in which inquisitors have always been in the habit of expressing their sympathy with their victims, when beyond the reach of the last hope of mercy; or had any attempt on his part been recorded, to procure the alleviation which he desired, and could not be without the power of effecting; or had there been no earlier letter of his extant to his friend Farel, in which he declares, "if ever this heretic should fall into my hands, I will take care, if my authority is worth a straw, that he shall not slip through them with his life." History fulfilled the threat, and disappointed the benevolent wishes, of Calvin; for on October 27, 1553, Servetus, whose constancy never failed him, was burnt alive. The act appears to have given great satisfaction to the leaders of the reformation. Calvin himself never repented of it; but eight years after, recommended it to the high chamberlain of the king of Navarre, as a model for the treatment of heretics; "above all, do not fail to rid the country of those infamous zealots who stir up the people to revolt against us; such monsters should be exterminated, as I have exterminated Michael Servetus the Spaniard." Beza took occasion from the act to write in defence of the destruction of heretics; even the moderate Melancthon testified his approbation; and Bucer ("a man," says Calvin, "of holy memory, and true servant of Christ,") had long before declared from the pulpit,

that "Servetus deserved evisceration, and to be torn limb from limb." Well may Mr. Robinson say, "this sentence was executed to the encouragement of Catholic cruelty, to the scandal of the pretended reformation, to the offence of all just men, and to the everlasting disgrace of those ecclesiastical tyrants, who were the chief instruments of such a wild and barbarous deed. Many have pretended to apologize for Calvin; but who is John Calvin, and what are his nostrums, which end in tyranny and murder, that the great voice of nature should be drowned in the din of a vain babbling about him."—"Robinson's Ecclesiastical Researches," p. 341.

[13] The American continent was discovered in 1498: the conquest of Mexico, the first Spanish settlement, effected in 1527: and the colony of Virginia, the first British settlement, named in 1585.

[14] Bacon published the Novum Organum in 1620. Galileo discovered Jupiter's satellites, January 8, 1610. Shakspeare died in 1616.

[15] Milton died in 1674. Newton published his Principia in 1686. Locke formed the design of his Essay on the Human Understanding in 1670; and it was published in 1690.

[16] A.D. 1682–1759.

[17] By Halley, Bradley, Clairaut, Lalande, &c.

[18] Handel died in 1759. Bishop Berkeley in 1753.

[19] A.D. 1759–1835.

[20] Clairaut, assisted by Lalande, undertook in 1757 the arduous task of computing the probable return of Halley's Comet, allowing for the effect of planetary perturbations on its course. He found that by the action of Saturn its arrival would be delayed 100 days, and by the action of Jupiter as much as 518. He suggested, that possibly the comet's period might undergo a further modification from the attraction of some yet undiscovered planet, beyond the orbit of Saturn. The arrival of the comet at the perihelion on March 13th, instead of April 13th, as he had predicted, afforded a remarkable confirmation of this conjecture. Its complete verification was reserved, as is well known, for Sir William Herschel, who discovered the planet which is called by his name on the 13th March, 1781.

NEED OF CULTURE FOR THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.*

"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."—2 TIMOTHY, ii. 15.

THERE is perhaps no Church in Christendom which exhibits the character and influences of the Gospel in their true and complete proportion. The spirit of Christianity has undergone decomposition; some of its elements have been embraced in the religion of sacerdotal or national establishments, others in the religion of sects. In establishments are preserved its traditional usages and archaic forms of speech; in dissent, its practical moral power. In the one it appeals to the imagination and more refined emotions; in the other, with graver tones to the conscience and the life. In the one it acts as a sentiment, in the other as a principle; calling up in the former case the sense of the dignified, the picturesque, the magnificent; in the latter, the cogency of strong and uncompromising conviction. The devotion of the one is quieter, more personal,—the offering of reverence; that of the other, more aspiring and passionate,—the offering of a less distant adoration. The morality of the former, merciful to human frailties, borders upon laxity; that of the latter, of more jealous temper, tends to austerity. The benevolence of the one is an expression of humility and compassion; that of the other,

* Cross Street Chapel, Manchester, 50th Anniversary of Manchester New College, January 24, 1835.

of zealotism. An establishment is rich in the poetry and the humanities of faith; it is enfolded in the graceful mantle of the past. Its majestic architecture,—monument of the mystic piety of other days, labouring to construct a fitting shelter for the solemnities of worship;—its ancient bell, swinging over the dust of generations that once listened to its call;—its spire upon the hills, whose "silent finger points to heaven,"—a testimony of civilization diffused, and human hopes and duties not forgotten, amid the solitude of nature; these things, and with them a crowd of historical recollections, present no ignoble attractions to Conformity,—attractions, within which churches are apt to enshrine themselves and sleep.

Of a sterner order, as well as of more recent origin, are the recollections of Dissent. Its history is that, not of splendour, but of persecution; its birth, not in ambition, but in self-denial; its pride is in resistance to oppression; its ancestry adorned with nobility, not of rank, but of conscience. The tale which it tells to its children of their forefathers, is of learned and holy men betrayed, and driven from church and home to wander in beggary; or of covenanted hosts that slept in arms upon the heath, and worshipped at midnight on the hill side, rather than shelter themselves in the cloister of episcopacy; or of exiled Puritans, who, resolved to put the Atlantic between them and tyranny, cast themselves on the wild elements and the wastes of the Western Continent, rather than "subscribe slave" in their own land; who felled the ancient forests in sacrifice to civilization and pure worship; and planted on the rocks of New England that banner of free religion, which is now the proud emblem of a hundred cities, and ere long perhaps will float in the breezes of both worlds.

The class of Nonconformists, of whom this venerable edifice reminds us that we are the successors, were distinguished by the honour they paid to learning as well as to conscience. The moral glory of the Gospel they held to be dignified by the intellectual eminence of the evangelist.

They deemed it fitting, that the Divine institution should suffer no wrong by being committed to rude and feeble hands; that the truth should be poured upon the world, unsoiled by ignorance; that Revelation should be guarded by those who knew more of its strength than its acutest enemies could affirm of its weakness; that it should be interpreted by those who had drunk profoundly of the spirit of its age; and command, as the vehicle of its diffusion, the best-ordered of the world's minds, and the most awakened of its sympathies. They appreciated more than others the extent of erudition needful to extract Christianity from the records in which it is embodied, and trace its history through the vicissitudes of seventeen centuries; and the power of thought required to apply its principles to the duties and the hearts of men. You will not deny that they judged right. You will not question the wisdom which, when their ministers were excluded from the national seats of learning, and found their integrity of opinion a disqualification for instruction there, raised for them a less ambitious but a freer shelter. Whatever faults you may perceive in the character of our ministry, it is not that it has too much learning, but too little enthusiasm; not that its intellect is too much cultivated, but its affections too little; not that it is too profoundly versed in the past, but too superficially touched by the sympathies of the present. You do not want less cultivation, but more soul; a more living spirit breathed into the outward forms of religion, and kindling them into the fires of a holier worship: you demand not a more empty mind, but one more teeming with aspiring thoughts;—a burning utterance, the overflowing of vivid convictions and quenchless desires;—appeals such as burst from men of high purposes and great hearts, heaving secretly with faith in God and hope for man. Let not these additional demands upon the ministry be abated. They are honourable to you and awakening to us: they indicate true and noble conceptions of the mission which religion has to accomplish in the

world; a deep sense of its sublimity; an absence of all cold scepticism of its power; a persuasion of its eternal fitness to the wants and capabilities of men; a solemn resolve to make it the ruler of cultivated, as it has been of barbarous life. But it is important that these demands should be regarded as *additional* claims on the pulpit; as not at variance with any attainments which it has hitherto possessed; not casting the slightest disrespect on the studies by which the candidates for its duties have hitherto been prepared. All the reasons which attached our forefathers to a learned clergy still exist. And whatever changes have taken place, since their time, in the sentiments of our churches and the condition of society, render more imperious the necessity of an enlightened ministry. I proceed to show that, if they held the attainment of this end a worthy object of their zeal, you have reason to regard it as a yet worthier aim of yours.

1. The feelings towards the Christian ministry have changed; and the change is such as to demand a more enlightened class of men, in order to make it yield the same results.

The causes of this change are to be sought, partly in the altered state of the whole framework of British society, partly in the theological history of our own communion.

The different stages of civilization are marked by the prevalence of different orders of sentiment and the ascendency of different classes of men. Physical force, thrown into combination by the cement of greedy and ferocious passions, is the first organizer of communities, the first rude creator of social order; and the men distinguished for corporeal energy and animal courage, for that terrible kind of decision which flows from vehement impulses and a reckless will, constitute the first natural rulers of human multitudes. At a subsequent period, this class is succeeded by the ecclesiastical order; the material by the moral sway; the sanguinary by the pacific; the solid arm of terrestrial tyranny by the representatives of

invisible terrors. When brutality has wearied the earth with woes, the exhausted hearts of men shelter themselves beneath the wing of religion; the hunted victim flies to the sanctuary; the weak, the oppressed, who have no worldly redress of suffering, invoke an avenging God, and dream of the retribution of heaven; and indignant humanity, clothed with the power of its wrongs,—its right hand quivering with the lightnings of justice,—stands up and utters the cry of faith, before which the guilty soul of violence quails. Religion, the antagonist of force, thus became its substitute: it stayed the arm of murder; it mitigated the outrages of the sword; its generous sentiments softened the hardships of feudalism; its fears determined the distribution of property. It broke the sceptre of mere animal power, and set over mankind the first form of *spiritual* dominion.

It was a dominion, however, that in this form could not last. It was too dependent on the irregularities of the world, on the ignorance, the crimes, and the miseries of men, not to yield before an improved order of society. It rested on the sympathies of the oppressed, the fears of the superstitious, the remorse of the guilty, and as oppression and superstition and guilt diminished with advancing civilization, was sure to pass away. To the ecclesiastical order have succeeded the moneyed classes: it is into their hands that social power is more and more transferred; it is their will, their morality, their sentiments, that now constitute the largest ingredient in public opinion, and impress upon events the course which they should take. And they have restored, though in an improved form, the dominion of materiality. Prosperity is their idol; the spread of luxury, the multiplication of external refinements, their measure of civilization; the cheapness of food and clothing, their criterion of a nation's happiness; the tendency to produce wealth, their prevailing standard of utility. By this test they estimate the worth of mental and moral qualities; the education that will tell upon the purse

is indeed essential; of that which only unfolds the faculties, refines the tastes, elevates the feelings, they cannot discern the practical use. The virtues which have reference to wordly success,—prudence, industry, integrity,—are in high esteem; the loftier sentiments which rise above the gainful to the beautiful, from the discreet to the disinterested, which venerate right without computing its profits, and scorn the wrong without cowardice at its pains, are feebly felt and shyly avowed. The outward world oppresses the energies of the soul; interest plants a heavy foot upon immortal desires; the invisible swims and faints away before the eye of self-indulgence; the ideal succumbs before the actual; comfort seduces piety to sleep; conscience grows enamoured of epicurean ease, and starts not at the thought of God: the future broods with no dread power upon the will, thrust away by the impertinences of the present. The ready fear, the living hope, the silent vow, the scrupulous search of heart, the ancient attitudes of reverence, have become rare. This extraordinary development of the *material* in life has lowered the estimate of the ministry, whose power is in the *spiritual.* It no longer represents to the eyes of men the only interests that are worthy of serious regard; it no longer speaks to hushed and listening spirits, agitated to the centre by the truths which it proclaims.

It cannot be, however, that society is not to advance beyond its present stage; and already symptoms are not wanting, to show that we are emerging from a physical to a moral civilization. But the clergy can never again enjoy the advantages which they have possessed, *as an order;* their mere professional influence has for ever passed away. The warrior, the priest, the merchant, having had their day, must hand over their influence to the man of great intellectual and moral power. When the first onset of prosperity has gone by, men begin to estimate their human nature more correctly, and regard it as something better than a mere machine for the creation of riches. Science,

art, virtue, devotion, are no longer felt to be only the mere instruments of order, and means of wealth, but the great *ends*, to the attainment and increase whereof every external advantage in life must be consecrated,—the ultimate purposes of individual and social existence, at once the duty of earth, and the recompense of heaven. All who further these ends,—those who elaborate new thoughts, and shower them on the understandings of mankind,—those who dart a ray of discovery into some unexplored recess of God's creation,—those who by profound converse with their own affections win power over others, and learn to sculpture forth in visible language the viewless emotions of the mind,—those who can well persuade the reason, and powerfully stir the generous sympathies, and quicken the virtuous efforts, and freshen the immortal hopes of men,—will be thought to perform the highest office, and wield the most beneficent power, for our race. Into this class must Christian ministers throw themselves; on these qualifications for influence must they rely. The artificial associations with their office, which gave them, till even recent times, a preternatural position above other men, have disappeared. The tide of conventional power has ebbed from them, and left them on the common strand of humanity, and they must trust to the recognized means of human persuasion, to the natural energy of their own faculties, the resources of their own knowledge, the glow of their own affections.

Besides this general change in the ruling powers of society, there are particular changes in the theological sentiments of our own communion, which have the same tendency to strip the ministry of all adventitious help from association, and reduce it to exclusive dependence on its own intellectual and moral forces. The theory which represents the Christian pastor as the heir of the apostolic office, and as sustaining a relation to the modern churches, analogous to that which Peter bore to the primitive assemblies of the faithful, has declined, if not disappeared. It is understood

that the functions of the first missionaries of the Gospel were, in their own nature, incapable of transmission; that of being the vehicle of "the Spirit of Truth" throughout the body of primitive believers; and more especially, that of testifying to the things which they had seen and heard as witnesses of Christ,—an office no more capable of delegation than intellect or eyesight. The dim and mystic conceptions of a divine mission, a call, a preternatural residence of God's spirit, in the teachers of Christianity, linger with us no more. The high sabbatarian notions, which once singled out the offices of public worship as the divinest means of grace, and concentrated upon them the intensest anxieties of conscience, and maintained the feelings so much on the stretch towards edification that the faintest breath upon the chords yielded a distinct response, no longer lend the preacher their powerful aid. A number of exciting topics, which work upon the passions, with but a cheap expenditure of thought, and the most ordinary exercise of imagination, have passed from our hands. We cannot tell men that there is *one act* of the mind, one perception of faith, on which alone depend their hope, their immortality, their affinity with God; one solitary thread of belief, twined on the everlasting throne, by which they hang over the unfathomable gulf, and which let insidious reason secretly unravel, and they fall! The warnings which we may utter against unworthy states of mind; the strong remonstrances against the wrong which sin inflicts upon our nature, against habits which damp the pure fires of the soul; the appeals that we make to the private love, which no conscience loses, for the noble and the good; the hopes which we offer of unchecked and eternal progress, without the delays of shame and of remorse, to those who never betray their high responsibilities, are doubtless more healthful and healing to man, because more true to God; but their influence it is more difficult to dispense with power: that influence requires for its development something far deeper than the rude zeal of fanaticism, a searching know-

ledge of the human heart, an analysis of human motives, a flood of human sympathies, a wise estimate of human good, a quickness of moral susceptibility, a clearness of moral judgment," which can be combined in one character, only by the assiduous and impartial cultivation of a nature not ungifted originally by God. When, then, was the demand for an enlightened ministry ever more urgent than it is now?

2. The feelings towards the Scriptures which we preach are changed; and the change has augmented the difficulty of applying them to the wants of the human mind.

The plenary inspiration of the Scriptures was once an admitted tenet among our Churches. It was supposed that the evangelical authors performed only the mechanical process of writing, and were, in fact, but amanuenses to the dictation of the Holy Spirit; or if they furnished, within certain limits, ideas as well as words, were directed, by Divine agency upon their faculties, to the selection of such as were infallibly correct. It may, indeed, be difficult to point out any recent period, in which precisely this form of belief was prevalent among our forefathers; but it is certainly the view in which their conceptions of Scripture had their origin, and which, long after some modifications had crept in, influenced their sentiments and feelings respecting the use of the Bible. Almost every part of Scripture was supposed to be both universal in its application and infallible in its meaning. The admission was hardly made, that the sacred writings contained matter of local and temporary interest, or were, in any of their parts, objects of historical curiosity rather than sources of moral obligation. The kind of textual veneration, the worship of the very letter of Scripture, which these notions naturally produced, rendered the task of the preacher exceedingly easy. Under shelter of the great authority, he could precipitate what impressions he pleased upon the hearts of men. Let him but cover a sentiment with a sacred phrase;

—let him but gild the coin of his own thoughts with the pure gold of a Scripture metaphor, and the counterfeit, however poor, would pass for revelation.

All this is now changed. The tendency among us (a tendency not, I think, likely to be arrested) is towards the belief that the Sacred Writings are perfectly human in their origin, though recording superhuman events; that the Epistles abound in the discussion of questions now obsolete; that the Gospels, with one exception, were constructed from earlier documents, whose origin it is impossible to trace, and whose fidelity rests upon their internal character; that even their preceptive parts will not yield the Christian morality pure to our hands, till a mass of local and temporary elements has been withdrawn. The historical rather than dogmatic character of Christianity, its transmission at least to us in an historical form, is becoming more and more evident. If this be so, how are we to make it yield its voice to the human conscience and to human hopes? We cannot use it as an oracle; we cannot appeal to its sentences as direct and conclusive authorities; for it is not its letter, but its spirit, not its details, but its principles, that belong to all men and ages. We must take possession of it as a history, before we can construct it into a system; we must deeply familiarize our minds with what is temporary, before we are competent to pronounce what is everlasting, in the Gospel. And who will say, that thus to interpret the history of Christ, to abandon ourselves freely to the impression of its incidents, is easy? Two conditions are essential to success, that the mind be empty of all modern theories, and full of all ancient knowledge. We must learn to listen to Christ in the spirit of a Hebrew of old: to stiffen with the ancestral pride of the Pharisee, and the official dignity of the priest, and the petulant scepticism of the Sadducee; to feel the shyness of the hated Samaritan, and the abjectness of the despised Publican; to crouch in the humiliation of tributaries, yet burn with the ambition of conquerors; and,

in reading the ancient Scriptures, to feel the mockery of magnificent prophecy amid a mean history. We must learn to walk the streets of Jerusalem, and bow with the throng in the temple courts, and cross the bridge of Kedron, and wander on the Mount of Olives. We must be on the shore of the lake when the fisherman is made the disciple, and experience the power on an uncultivated mind and a rugged heart, of the refined and heavenly soul of Christ. With John in the hall of judgment; with Mary beneath the Cross; with the weeping Magdalen by the sepulchre, startled by her own name; with Stephen, serenely falling amid foes that gnashed their teeth with rage; with Peter in his midnight prison; with Paul in travels and in shipwreck, in perils and in bonds, speaking to philosophers on the Areopagus of Athens, and walking silent through the forum of Rome; we must make the circuit of the ancient world, penetrate the recesses of Jewish and Pagan society, sympathize with their opinions, adopt their emotions, and trace their modifications of those human affections which, in their essence, are immortal.

Thus to pass behind the veil of antiquity, is the only method of rising to a genuine appreciation of the mind of Christ, or of attaining a clear vision of the perfect religion which it enshrines. And surely, if this is no slight demand upon learning, no little insight into the philosophy of human nature will be required, when we proceed to analyse the character of our great model, that we may derive thence the universal laws of duty; when we bring his spirit and principles to the altered conditions of modern life, and preach from them to childhood and age, to penury and affluence, to ignorance and wisdom, to aspiring virtue and deluded sin, to private suffering and public wrong, to the ever-varying heart and conscience of individuals and nations. And in performing this office, it is not to be forgotten, that the ministry has not now to deal with such audiences as worshipped in our temples of old; not with those whose chief means of knowledge and exercise of

intellect are comprised within the weekly ministrations of religion. The pulpit is no longer the sole, or the most important disseminator of ideas; its monopoly is gone, and the quality of its supply must be improved. It has a noble competitor, say rather coadjutor, in the press, which is daily training masculine minds, and accustoming men to athletic thought;—which is spoiling their taste for puerilities, and mysticism, and affectation;—which makes them sensitive to sophistry and impatient of formality, and has taught them to relish the speculations of vigorous understandings, and the outpourings of earnest hearts. Among those classes which form our worshipping assemblies, the whole sphere of life and action has become enlarged. They move upon a vaster theatre, and their existence is on a greater scale. They think, they feel, they do, more than their fathers; they pass through a more complicated individual lot, and wield a more extended social power. Their problems of duty have become less simple, and their responsibilities have greatly deepened. No ministry, then, can adequately meet their wants which is not enlightened and sincere.

Fifty years ago, the desire of such a ministry led to the formation of the institution which invites our good will this day. I have endeavoured to follow out the reasons for such an establishment down to the present date, and to show, that they strengthen as we descend; that the more recent changes in society and sentiment impart greater force to their pleadings; and that if a cultivated ministry were desirable, when our Presbyterian predecessors decided in its favour, much more is it important in these days, when the preacher finds his office stript of superstitious reverence, and the Scriptures requiring a more circuitous and refined method of application.

With respect to the College of which I have now the privilege to be the advocate, and had once the higher privilege to be a pupil, I can hardly venture to speak, lest in the warmth wherewith I might enumerate my obligations,

I should seem to ascribe to it more than I possess. A retrospect of the peaceful period of youthful studies, over eight intervening years of toil not without its tears, is apt indeed to exhibit the past in colours too tender; its faint voices come to us as a melody athwart the troubled waters of life. However that may be, I must render, in a word, my tribute of gratitude. The hours spent in that much-loved retirement, I muse on with delight: the ideas with which they furnished me are among my choicest treasures; and those who imparted these ideas, or enabled me to find them, live and grow in my most affectionate veneration. Would that all could enter life through such a vestibule of well-directed years! and life would be to them a temple of duty, consecrated by cheerful memories, and kindling with inextinguishable hopes.

THE OUTER AND THE INNER TEMPLE.*

HITHERTO, no voice has been heard within this place, but the sound of Scripture, of poetry, and prayer. The first descent is harsh to this profaner speech; and could scarcely be endured, had not our hearts become filled with thoughts, that ask perhaps for an interpreter. We have come hither to dedicate this house of worship;—which needs only the added grace of Christian memories, to make it sacred as well as beautiful:—but we feel that consecration cannot be imparted in an hour, even by vows the most sincere; and our meditations press inquiringly into the future, wondering what sanctities may be gathered together here, by length of time and love. We have sought on bended knees the benediction of the Holiest; but we know that his blessing dwells not in the enclosure of the temple, and must be brought by the faithful and filial souls that frequent its courts. We have breathed a supplication, which spreads over years and lives unknown; and the Hearer of the prayer already beholds in answer,—that which we too cannot help imagining,—the history (long and peaceful may it be!) of this new church. Who does not see at this moment a vaster and more various assemblage thronging this pavement, than that which hears me now? The transient forms of many generations, entering with young wonder, and retiring with aged trust; children, as of old, marking how their parents, with unspeakable devotion, bow before a yet higher presence; the weekly

* Opening of Upper Brook Street Chapel, Manchester, Sunday, September 1, 1839.

greeting of families recurring without end; the garb and the gratulations of the joyous, coming up amid friends for thanksgiving; the symbols and the sympathies of grief, stealing back to the old resort, and able now to bear the first silent pressure of a neighbour's hand; the weary and the anxious, bringing the drag of care, and taking away the flush of faith; and *all*, stepping aside hither from the dusty walks of custom, to be disenchanted of its spells, and catch the spirit that makes all things new, and feel the solemn weight of life's deep mysteries;—are not these the visionary groups, that seem to share with us the consecration of this day? And winding through them all, to form them into one dear brotherhood, is the blessed chain of Sabbaths, whose first link is this moment in our hand. The inward life of these our successors, no human eye can read; but you have raised this roof to shelter it, knowing only that they will not cease to strive under the common wants of our humanity. These walls stand ready to be inscribed with the invisible colours of every human emotion,—to be the divine confessional for penitence that dares not speak, and doubts that fade away in silence, and hopes that glow beneath the light of cheerful praise;—to be, I had almost said, a tablet to the memory of God, but that it is all open to him, like the hidden temple stones. It is something nobler than mere curiosity, which impels us to wish that we could decipher that history too: our interest in the future Providence of humanity urges us to ask, whether this house of prayer will be faithful in its day to its high office; what special function it will perform in the communion of churches, what influence will flow forth from its gates on the societies of men; what true and Christian hearts will be nurtured within it; what good faith and conscience, of which shipwreck might else be made, will find a life-boat here in times of storm;—in short, what everlasting thoughts the Divine Spirit, that maketh his abode with hospitable souls, will meditate within this place. In answer to these questions, we may at least define our own desires and hopes;

declare, what spirit we would here be permitted to enshrine; to what faith and service we consecrate this Christian sanctuary. In one phrase, duly pondered, the whole exposition is comprised; *This is a Church of God's Messiah.** To develop the meaning of these words, which will be found of neither vague nor antiquated spirit, let us avail ourselves of the aid we may derive from the following saying of Christ:

> "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; neither shall they say, lo here! or lo there! for behold, the kingdom of God is within you."—LUKE xvii. 20, 21.

The Messiah is no historical personage; yet was the system of ideas associated with his name something more than a mere set of Jewish traditions. When the belief in him which prevailed in Palestine is divested of its local form and natural dress, we reach a faith most venerable and altogether natural to the human mind. It is indeed but a concentration of the trust in Providence; an application of this great idea to the prospects of our race; an expectation that the glories of the divine government in their royal progress through the universe, will not pass this province of creation by, or refuse (seeing that to the Eternal a thousand years are but as an evening watch) at least some millennial lodgment here. The thoughtful and good have never been able to divest themselves of the suspicion, that this earth is designed to be the scene, and our human nature the subject, of some more glorious experience, some diviner life, than either has yet exhibited.

* Since the delivery of this discourse, I have learned that a new place of Christian worship in New York has been designated "The Church of the Messiah"; and that the designation has been announced and defended in a dedication sermon by the accomplished pastor, Rev. Orville Dewey. I have not seen Mr. Dewey's discourse; but conclude that the co-incidence is simply verbal. Indeed, the difference is obvious between applying such a phrase as the distinctive name of a single edifice, and using it as a general description, from which to deduce the proper functions of all true churches.

Indeed the impression is one of the most elementary results of reflection on the course of human affairs, and starts up on the collision of our observation of the actual, with our idea of the possible. Who that has a heart for the sufferings, or a prayer for the virtues of his kind, can pretend to be content with the history of departed ages, or the condition of existing millions, whom we pronounce, but dare hardly imagine, to be immortal? Who can issue from his wanderings over the field of the world, and see what are called the vicissitudes of history varying only the surface of society, and beneath, one dull, permanent, immeasurable mass of human beings, trampled on by an iron necessity, and performing no noble function of life, but in their muscular heaving beneath this weight,—without inexpressible melancholy? The pure breath and silence of the native earth, are not more defiled by the noisomeness and din of cities, than is the tranquillity of the past broken by the frequent groans of bleeding and guilty humanity. Who that believes in the righteousness of God, can suppose that he will for ever be satisfied with this? Who that looks at the godlike eminence to which a just development of genius and conscience has often raised our nature, can imagine that it is collectively to have no age of glory? No; the long night of ignorance and sin must pass away at length; the earth, in which the fathers rest from too much toil, will not always be moistened again with the children's tears; those smiling heavens will not for ever mock us with their glad promise, and the melodies of nature keep singing their songs to heavy hearts: there must be deliverance in store; a reserve of regenerating agencies, that in the latter days shall renew the earth with blessings, and people it with the true children of the Highest. The power commissioned to this end, whatever be its form, is God's Messiah; the powers to which we are apt erroneously to trust for this end, constitute man's Messiah. These two are perpetually coming into collision; and the errors of human expectation on this matter, having a deep seat in our nature, are much

the same in all ages; and the very mistakes of the which of old committed the tragedy on Calvary, ar among us still. We all believe that, at the birth of C tianity, Heaven's great Messiah actually came,—that ... true divine instrumentality for perfecting the characters of men and their communities, began its operation, and has ever since been sending benediction on the world; and will yet, by methods which we must administer, complete the promised transformation. When he came, he was thrown into the midst of a set of human anticipations, displaying God's and man's Messiah in most instructive contrast. The errors of that time not being Hebrew, but human, and the mission of Christ not being insulated, but specially representative of the spirit of the divine government, the one is a sample for ever of the thoughts of men, the other of the thoughts of God; and from that focal point of history the clearest light is thrown upon the real methods of Providence, and therefore the true faith and duties of his children, respecting the sanctification of men and the progress of society. A comparison of the false proposals of human folly, with the genuine execution of divine wisdom, will make it manifest in what spirit, and with what faith, we should consecrate a church of his Messiah.

See, first, how the great Father rebukes every plan of partial and exclusive deliverance; and declares that any rescue of his must fold the earth in its embrace. The Hebrews would have had the divine Emancipator to be theirs alone; the child of a nation; the property of a class; the personal concentration of their collective peculiarities; the punisher of other men's hatred and contempt, by adopting and indulging their own. The golden age for which they prayed, under the desecrated name of "the consolation of Israel," was little better than a dream of vengeance. When the lash of some new oppression fell, they could think with a bitter smile, how soon the turns would change, and secretly clench the hand at the pressure of that hope. When the light laugh of the Greek

derided their physiognomy and their superstitions, they imaged to themselves the hour when heaven would send the destined vice-gerent, with the outward characteristics of the race stamped upon his features, their ritual upon his life, their faith and passions upon his mind. It was by clearing away the sceptic and the profane, and disposing of them in some suitable and terrible way, that God was to free the saints from all annoyance, and fulfil the prophecy which says, "there shall be nothing to hurt or destroy in all the earth." And then all that is fair and glorious was to be evolved from their own Jerusalem; even Galilee being too far beyond the shadow of the temple to make it possible that "any good could come out of Nazareth." The Jubilee of Heaven was to commence, without a merciful thought of the outcast millions, driven to the place of weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth: the Israelite might uplift a yet bloody hand in hot and passionate prayer; and the air of Moriah be rent with the national hymn of thanksgiving to Jehovah, for trampling on his children, and pampering his favourites, and turning insensibly away from their brother's blood, that crieth to him from the ground.

The Jews had plenty of Scripture to quote for all this. Nevertheless, it was Satan, and not God, that took them up into this high mountain of their pride, and stretched beneath them thus all the kingdoms of the world, and the glories of them. The thing was a temptation, and they took it for a prophecy; deceived perhaps by the mere sound of holy writ, and the interpreting power of their own passions. For see in what majestic way the Lord of all the earth chides the selfish dream, and proclaims his diviner counsels. He takes a village Christ, whose soul is human, and not Hebrew; whose spirit has become acquainted with men in the retreats of families, not in the schools of Priests and Pharisees; and felt the presence of God in the stainless breath of his native hills, and the lilies of his native fields, more than in the smoke of altars,

and the withered fragrance of incense;—one who would neither strive nor cry, who had no scorn except for narrow affections and mean pretences; from whose voice hearers, listening for denunciation, receive the tones, more piercing far, of a divine forgiveness; and whose eye, when spectators look for the flash of resentment, fills only with silent tears. Nor was this all; for when his countrymen, enraged that his *mind* is not exclusively theirs, led him away to Calvary, God does but take the occasion to wrest from them his *person* too; permits his executioners to destroy the only part of his nature in which he resembled them, and then redeems the everlasting elements of his humanity for a blessing to all people and all times; and says to Death, "Take now the son of David, but leave the son of Man; the Israelite is thine, but I suffer not my holy one to see corruption." And so, the cross, which was to disown him as the Messiah of Jerusalem, made him the Messiah of mankind. He could not carry to the other side of mortality the distinctions which contract the sympathies of life, and conceal the truth of things on this. Ascending from this world, he could bear no relations so trivial as those of clime and race, but saw its whole circle beneath him, as the object of his impartial benediction. And thus did he pass into universality as he rose; and from a higher point, and with wider proclamation did his glad tidings spread; no nook so deep and dark, that they did not reach it; the Samaritan, the Gentile, the Slave, heard of the brother, once despised as they, calling to them from the skies; listened to him as disciples from afar; found that they too had celestial elements within them; and discerned the awe of immortality in their nature, and the sanctity of responsibility in their life. How could God more significantly declare that the delivering agency of his Providence must be comprehensive as his Fatherhood, and generous as his Love?

The spirit of the great Ruler *once*, is his spirit *always*. He whose judgment severely rebuked Pharisaism in Palestine

of old, cannot be supposed to have become polemic in his preferences in these latter days. We therefore desire to guard our hearts against the irreverent pride of system; we profess to have no Christ exclusively our own. We consecrate this Church to an *impartial Messiah*, and a *universal gospel*. It is dedicated not to belief, but to worship; and sends its invitations forth, not to the scholastic intellect, but to the meek and Christian heart; to those who are too much possessed and penetrated by the sublime and simple relations of humanity to God, too intent on the solemn oracles of conscience, too deeply touched by the divine spirit of Christ, too busy in practical conflict with the evils of human society, too near the illumination of their immortality,—to spend their zeal on the differing symbols by which the incapacity of men may represent to itself the infinite and unattainable truth. Let no presuming creed, let no cold formalism enter here; but let the objects which should be *loved*, for ever transcend the notions that should be *thought*. We believe that the life of duty will always bring the heart of faith; that no one who spends himself in the service of men, will think seriously amiss of the providence of God; that true piety lies nearer the centre of our nature, than the region of doubt and speculation; that it has in it the blessed vitality which belongs to our best affections, enabling it to draw the nutriment of a divine life from the merest stubble of error, and to work the miracle of gathering grapes of thorns, and figs of thistles. Not indeed that we would intentionally plant the thistle and thorn in the garden of the Lord; or leave them there, when we can replace them with any nobler tree of life; but the poorest growth of a devout faith is better far than the barren clod of a material existence. The worship here will doubtless be conformed to a definite system of belief, always expressed with frankness, occasionally recommended with earnestness; how otherwise could prayer be shed forth with unrestrained simplicity, and the aspirations of conscience be genuine, and the applications

of responsibility be close? Nor will the spirit of even theological reformation be wanting; for no one believes truly that does not believe earnestly; and it is impossible to be impressed with the Personal Unity, the Moral Perfection, the Universal Paternity of God; to recognize Christ as *morally* though not *physically* Divine; to feel the personal nature of sin and holiness, alienable by no transfer, and attainable by no miracle; to see in prospect, however distant, the guilt and suffering of men worn out, and every wanderer gathered back into the divine embrace; without desiring to supplant with these great ideas the harsher and more repulsive conceptions endeared by ecclesiastical tradition. But this desire will be regulated by a profound respect not only for the rights of the mind in matters of opinion, but for the strong love of the human heart in matters of faith. The anxiety will be not to unsettle and devastate, but to establish and construct. Men must be converted, we are aware, by their veneration, not by their doubts; and new religions are successful, not by producing, but by relieving the scepticism which prepares a void for their admission. God has so ordained it, that society will yield nothing, not even the paltriest superstition, to the persuasion of mere disproof. The most cutting and wintry winds of doubt may drive through the soul; yet with evergreen life it will hold fast even its sapless and withered leaves of faith, till, in more genial season, a new foliage shall burst forth for its adornment. If we take up the task of reformation, we pray God that it may be in the spirit, not of sacrilege, but of devotion; that when we take up the sword to do battle against error, we may go forth, not as the wanton Destroyer, but as the generous Avenger: for in vain do we strike the idol with one hand, till we can hold up a gospel in the other. For many a year at Athens had piety, philosophy, oratory, showered acute and sceptic sarcasms at Olympic Jove, and his worship stood unmoved as his own marble form; but when Paul, without a sneer, even taking a text from a Pagan altar, revealed the Un-

known God, and preached Jesus and the resurrection, the doom of the whole Pantheon went forth upon his voice. And this reverential temper is the more obligatory and the more natural to us, because we look with unaffected veneration on every mode of Christian belief, and are persuaded that no soul that makes faithful use of any, shall die from dearth of the daily bread of life. For myself, indeed, I am convinced, that their varieties are largely created by the spiritual demands of differing minds, and administer a well diversified supply to their several wants; that they never will, and never need, vanish from the face of Christendom. Yet we will not forego the hope of unity at last; a unity, however, more deep-seated and affectionate than that of mere opinion; a unity of allegiance to one Father, and toil for one Brotherhood, and reverence for one law of Duty, and aspiration for one Home in heaven; the universal church of good and faithful souls, adorning God's providence with varieties of thought, and strengthening it by consentaneousness of love. To aid in gathering the elements for so glorious a community, we devote this Church of the Messiah.

Let us notice another particular, in which the Messiah of God has proved quite different from the Messiah of men. It was always thought, not only by the Jews, but even by the early Christians, that the great Deliverer would personally visit the earth, and reign thereon; that he would come, armed with celestial force, which no man or nation could resist; that he would supersede all existing arrangements, annihilate all principalities and powers, sweep away all actual interests, erect new institutions, and remodel the whole structure of society. The living subjects of his kingdom were to pass into it unchanged and passive; and the great revolution was to be in their mutual position and organization. The individual was to find his millennium in the accumulation of outward good; and the world, in the re-adjustment of its communities, and the beneficence of its administration. Believing men might continue as

they were, waiting the consummation; but nothing less would suffice for the scene around them than altogether a new heaven and a new earth.

Instructively enough did God set aside all this. He did not let his Messiah so much as touch a single institution, or put forth even the show of force upon any part of the frame work of society. Spontaneously did the infallible conscience of Jesus fly from any such idea, and struggle with it as a temptation in the wilderness; and from those who would have made him king, he retreated to the solitary prayer of the sea-beach and the mountain. And herein he did only that which was well-pleasing to the Father; who was so intent to proclaim his thoughts above ours, high as the heavens above the earth, that he withdrew the great deliverer from the very scene he was to transform; separated him from it by the interval of a creation, that he might not even seem to stretch out his hand upon it. Yet the great regeneration was to be achieved; only in place of Messiah's *collective government* of men, they were to come with *individual faith* to him; to seek him simply with the private heart; to be swayed in soul by his divine image. He was never to descend to their earthly life; but they to rise to his most heavenly spirit.

Providence, then, emphatically discourages our illusory reliance on mechanical reconstructions of society; disperses our dreams of perfectibility by ingenious arrangement; and rather operates by quite another method, beginning with the affections of individuals, and after securing the sanctity of these, leaving the outward machinery of communities to their spontaneous creation. In the moral government of the world, he works by the vital principle of growth from within, not by the crystalline, of deposit from without. And seeing that as the Father worketh hitherto, so Christ works, we think it well to consecrate a church of the Messiah, *to the inward life, the personal faith, the private affections,* of the individual believer. This appropriation of a Christian sanctuary, experience of

the past will be found to justify, and the spirit of the present greatly to require.

Experience justifies it. For it renders it most evident, that both in the solitary character, and the collective civilization of men, the inward life has authority from God to rule the outward; and always does rule it, in spite of various deceptive plans which we are perpetually contriving for reversing the action. How ancient and how vain the effort to change the mind by re-adjustment of the lot; to evade the stern necessities of duty, by idle trust to some new facilities of position! Could we only fly to a less harassed life, how would the confusion of conscience lapse into the fairest order! Were men more reasonable and grateful, how willing we should be to bless them! This trouble once away, we should chafe and fret no more! These weary days abated, we should win some piety of heart! Alas! thus to conjure up before us some fair palace of existence has no efficacy to exorcize the fiends that torture and corrupt us, but even beckons them to crowd and throng upon us more: a mind thus occupied is the very nest they love: the familiar demons of temptation well understand their place; and when they perceive this swept and garnished house in the imagination, they know that they may enter there; and unobserved, invite many other spirits of evil to steal in too. For this very propensity, to appeal from obligatory convictions to circumstantial excuses, is in truth the master-spirit of unfaithfulness, that can call up at will a legion of seducing auxiliaries from the fathomless abyss of human delusions. This inverted reliance of the inward upon the outward life is the primary mark of moral laxity and thriftlessness. It is the restless and unstable, not the firm and ancient denizens of the good kingdom of the Lord, that are ever longing for some foreign colony of opportunities, where a lighter tillage may bring a larger fruit; and with result no happier than we might anticipate. The seas may look smooth, and the climate fair, upon the mere map of

things; but God's elements, within which we are fast prisoners, are everywhere the same; no ocean without its storms, no land without the bramble and the rock; to plough and build on any plot of service in this world, and make its plenty smile beneath the eye of heaven, demands the brave resolve, and patient skill, the cheerful toil, the feet early in the fields, of the true labourer of God. And there are few that rove to find some ampler lot abroad, who do not first neglect the small husbandry of duty at home. We are deceived by the mere external look, the visual conception of ourselves in some new position, devising wisely and executing well; and forget how different a thing it is to lie still and dream, and to start up and work; forget the weary tension of the will, the scrupulous frugality of conscience, the frequent solitude of purpose, the faint collapse upon the dust of life. No; it is not these remote imaginings that renovate the character: but the secret glow of some living point within the soul; the fall of a divine and morning light on some affection, waking alone and unwatched from sleep; the seed-like growth of some noble faith within the heart, becoming at length the shadiest of the trees of life, wherein the birds of blessed song find shelter. Where there is really this inward faith, this venerating trust in some deep-seated conviction, the outward obstructions of the lot spontaneously yield to it; and scarcely is there any mountain of difficulty that may not, by this power, be hurled into the sea.

Society, in like manner, must be reformed from within, and vivified from the heart to the extremities. All experience throws discouragement on the speculations of the social mechanist, who hopes to mend the evils of human life by a nice disposition of its institutional forces; and to perfect human character by the application of a precise gauge to its motives, and a fit adjusting screw to its passions. The conception is intrinsically foolish; since the organization of communities is nothing without the internal mind that works it, and cannot control that mind, of which

it is every moment the creature and the slave. Even in a machine, there is no art known by which *a force can prevent itself from bursting:* and our nature, especially when exhibited in sympathetic masses, is no machine; its powers, excited from within, are incalculable and terrible; and the attempt even to measure them is as poor an affectation as to try with an instrument of glass the heat of the volcano. I would on no account speak with unconcern of the great institutions whose consolidation or improvement it is the object of the statesman to secure: but political changes have a very limited agency; and from exaggerated estimate of this, they usually disappoint. They are preventive, rather than productive; and are needed to destroy a dangerous variance between a nation's mind and its social forms. When wrong, institutions are perilous irritations; when right, they are but the natural shapes, the becoming vest, in which a people's character may manifest itself, and move with least restraint. There is an essential falsehood in every theory which confounds the mere costume of society with its moral life, and imagines that, unless it is in perfect dress, it is going to die. It is with communities, as well as individuals, that the most graceful drapery may conceal decline, and robustness walk about in rags. The true life of the human community is planted deep in the private affections of its members; in the greatness of its individual minds; in the pure severities of its domestic conscience; in the noble and transforming thoughts that fertilize its secret nooks. Who can observe, without astonishment, the durable action of men truly great on the history of the world, and the evanescence of vast military revolutions, once threatening all things with destruction. How often is it the fate of the former to be invisible for an age, and then live for ever; of the latter, to sweep a generation from the earth, and then vanish with slight trace!

To cherish then the inward life of faith and piety, to foster the sanctities of the individual mind, is to obey the

experienced commands of God: it is nothing less than to stand by the providential fountains of civilization, and reverently guard them that they become not dry. This is in truth the proper function of a church; and it is one of the painful peculiarities of all our modern Christianities, that they more or less abandon this divine office, and mingle with the outward contests and jarring interests of the season and the place. There is, I believe, a profound truth in the popular impression that religion should not defile its sacredness by contact with the scene of political and secular strife. Influence in that scene, and influence often paramount, it must possess; but only by its occupation of the mind, and direction of the will, of the actors there; whose affections, not whose opinions, it is commissioned to keep right. The disposition of the present times, which criticizes every thing, and trusts itself to nothing,—which believes no truth, venerates no object, expects no blessing, performs no duty, breathes no prayer, without a reason logically clear, is destructive of the simplicity of Christ and the genuineness of faith. We believe, now-a-days, more in religion than in God; and study conscience, instead of following duty. This critical temper bears down the tendencies to individual devotior; poisons the spirit of self-forgetfulness; and forces into artificial action the propensities, always too potent, to an Epicurean and calculative life. It is seasonable, therefore, no less than Christian, to raise this temple, as a retreat for the private and unspoken affections of those who feel that earth is not without its awful relations to heaven. Let the chaste and vaulted forms of this house be an emblem of the accordant grace and symmetry, that should prevail in the inward life of the believer,—that temple not made with hands,—which beneath this shelter, is to attain its beauty and perfection. When untrodden by the feet of worshippers, let it inclose only Silence, which is one of the attributes of God; which itself fosters whatever is divine within us; which broods over the holiest moments of our

life below; and which will surround us, when our spirits glide away in death on their lonely passage to the immortal sphere. And never let it be said, that our inmost affections may be cherished in solitude better than in society. It is not indeed society, it is communion, here; and there is a timidity in faith, when left alone, a recoil from transitory doubts, a fear breaking from the very greatness of its suggestions, which vanish before the warmth of other souls: and when a multitude of brother men stand around me and feel the very same, respond in heart to the same utterance of prayer, and turn their eyes, filled with the same interior light, to the heaven that opens as we gaze, the truth becomes mysteriously clear, and the tremulous whispers of hope strengthen into the trumpet-tongued oracles of God.

Here, then, my friends, we take up our rest. We consecrate this church to a *gospel that is universal, and a piety that is individual;* to a religious love of men, and a spiritual devotion towards God. Certainly, neither consecration can depart hence while my friend, in whose place I now stand, shall be permitted by the guardian providence of our lives, to shed forth his thoughts of wisdom and of love on the hearts of yourselves and your children. With long and unrelaxing faithfulness may he show you his own accustomed way to a genuine simplicity of life, and yield up in your service the well-ordered graces of a mind, which we might esteem the rich palace, were it not rather the pure temple of the Lord. Should troubled times approach, should the principles which we hold dear be doomed to a severer ordeal than they have yet known, should a scorn so terrible visit us in these days of strife and passion, that unstable churches waver and fall away, you will be reminded that only with souls of a most clear sincerity can the grace of Christ for a moment make abode, and that from the least unfaithfulness the spirit of God must instantly retreat. You will also be told something of the traditions of our fathers; with whom a conviction was an oracle, though it consigned them to a prison or to the

Atlantic storms; who passed through persecution, leaving nothing behind them but their exclusiveness; and of whom we are not worthy to be the children, if, parting with their devotedness, we take their freedom, but use it as a freedom to do nothing or do wrong; and make their brave fidelity bequeath to us a legacy of falsehood or of fear. And should a happier Providence prevail within the precincts of our churches, Christianity will yet have no common trials to encounter, and many a noble war to wage with the inexhaustible forms of intellectual and moral evil. Here, as on a watch-tower of contemplation, high-lifted above the field of the world, you will descry the posts of danger that courageous hearts delight to fill: and hence will go forth to swell the ranks of the resolute and true. God, that gave the gospel and its power, still lives: his inspiration surely is not past and spent; but only needs the open and willing soul, the simple and devoted conscience, the clear and loving look of faith upturned to Him, to come again and dwell with all its blessedness. May His spirit, that wandered of old around the walls of Nazareth,—His spirit, that ever bloweth where it listeth, be henceforth often heard to whisper around these walls!

THE BIBLE AND THE CHILD.*

"And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them. But when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God."—LUKE, xviii. 15, 16.

THERE is no sentiment more natural to thoughtful minds than that of reverence for childhood. Many sources both of mystery and love meet in the infant life. A being so fresh from non-existence seems to promise us some tidings of the origin of souls: a being so visibly pressing forward into the future, makes us think of their tendency. While we look on the "child as father of the man," yet cannot tell of *what kind* of man,—all the possible varieties of character and fate appear for the moment to be collected into that diminutive consciousness: that which may be the germ of any, is felt as though it were the germ of all: the thread of life, which, from our hand that holds it, runs forward into instant darkness, untwines itself there into a thousand filaments, and leads us over every track and scene of human things;—here, through the passages where poverty crawls; there, to the fields where glory has its race;—here, to the midnight lake where meditation floats between two heavens; there, to the arid sands where passion pants and dies. Infancy is so naturally suggestive, it is the representative of such various possibilities, that it

* Paradise Street Chapel, Liverpool, July, 1845.

would be strange did we not regard it with a feeling of wonder.

Wise men, however, are fond of discovering ingenious reasons for natural sentiments. And there was a theory in ancient times, that the souls of all men come hither from a pre-existing state, where they dwelt within the shelter and near the light of God; where truth and love were as affluently poured on perception, as light and sound upon the senses here; and the sublimest thoughts of beauty, of virtue, of science, of Deity, streamed amid the spirits of that purer air, like sunbeams amid the clouds, bathing them in glory. Birth into this world was a transference of the mind from a celestial to an earthly life; its benumbing contact with material things; its retirement from the boundless and brilliant freedom of a spiritual life, to the dark and narrow cave of a corporeal being. The further it advanced into the interior of its mortal existence, and the more skilled it became in groping along the ways of experience, the more faint grew the impression of the immortal region it had left, and the more dim were the rays of reminiscence that yet painted a divine vision on its path. Education was a process of forgetfulness; the gradual extrusion of the godlike by the human; the drowning of abstract truth in experimental knowledge; the tapering-off of sublime perceptions of the universal into mean individual sensations. When, under the influence of this doctrine, Plato looked upon a child, he saw through that shell of life an intelligence fresh from God: it was a star dropped from its sphere. Still filled with dreams and memories of the invisible, half present still in its divine abode, it was a thing of sanctity to behold; for its orb of existence floated yet on the margin of the unknown world, and, though creeping on to be eclipsed by the shadows of mortality, had its edge yet illumined by the past.

Viewed under this aspect, human life is a declension from the divine to the earthly; and infancy claims respect because it is in immediate contact with the earlier and

the holier state. Christianity preserves the solemnity, and dissipates the irrepressible melancholy of such a theory: retaining the parts, it reverses their order, and represents our life as an ascension from the earthly to the divine. Childhood, in the view of Christ, presents not the wreck, but the elements, of an heavenly existence; not the ruin, but the design, of a temple not made with hands. Its glory is not of the past, but of the future; its experience is to be not a loss, but a gain, of truth and goodness; its education here not a vain struggle to preserve memories that inevitably vanish, but an inspiration, that can never disappoint the willing heart, after mental and moral excellence, rising always to more godlike forms. It were a task of sadness to take up the infant life, as if it were the fallen petals of a celestial flower, borne to our feet by the stream of things, and every moment fading more; but it is a task of gladness to accept it as the seed and germ of an everlasting growth, which, planted in the rock, and strengthened by the storms of earth, shall bloom at length in the eternal fields.

To educate a child is an office of which no one, taking the Christian view, can think lightly. To administer perceptions, and unfold the faculties in their season and proportion; to give power to the affections, without impairing their symmetry; to develop, in their right order, and to their full intensity, the great ideas of duty and of God; to exhibit human virtues and relations in so beautiful an aspect, that the soul may pass from them with ease to the venerating love of the Infinite Mind; is a task of responsibility so solemn, as to invest every parent's life with the sanctity of a divine mission.

If the philosopher's doctrine had been the true one, and the soul had been like a bird fallen from the skies,—its plumage soiled in the dust, and its forces drooping in our heavier air,—it would seem a cruel office to stimulate it to ascend again, by convulsive effort, to an element native, but natural no more. But, as the truth really stands, we

have not to provoke a strength jaded and expiring, but to aid and develop one that is half formed; ourselves to bear it awhile into the heights "as upon eagle's wings"; and then launch it from the precipice alone, to sweep down the gale, and soar into the light it loves.

Many, however, have but a feeble impression of the delicacy and responsibility of this task,—of training the early mind to aspire, by the power of the noblest ideas of duty and religion. There is no department of education in which wrong methods are so fatal;—in which the conveyance of a thought into the mind at an unhappy moment, or by an unhappy process, may leave a more indelible and prejudicial effect; in which the penetrative and considerate spirit of sympathy,—which is the true secret of educational as of all other moral power,—is more absolutely demanded; in which different minds more require to have their individuality consulted; yet there is none to which a more hard, technical, and wholesale system is applied. While secular instruction is the object of constant study and improvement, and a thousand ingenuities present themselves to facilitate labour and secure perspicuity, the method of religious and moral education continues the same. The reason is obvious. This is a department which is thought to be incapable of improvement,—in which it would be deemed impious in any man to propose any material alteration; the sacred writings furnishing a perfect system made to our hands. The whole responsibility is at once thrown upon the Bible. It is put before the eyes of a child, and little further care or anxiety bestowed upon the matter. Teachers assume that all its parts are alike and perfectly inspired; all of universal moment; all invested with the form most fitted for every human mind, so that to familiarize the young with their whole contents, without presuming to select, is at once the wisest means and the ultimate end of all religious and moral education. This doctrine, which would impose upon us in our families and our schools the Bible, and the whole

Bible, as not indirectly furnishing the principles, but constituting the direct instrument, of all spiritual instruction,—a doctrine insisted on in high ecclesiastical tone, and brought to bare against every project of comprehensive education,—requires to be strongly resisted and plainly exposed. It is no less at variance with the present condition of theological knowledge, than mischievous in its social results.

In the following remarks, every candid hearer will perceive that I argue not against the use of the Bible, but against the use of the *whole Bible*, in religious education. The spirit and the life of Christ, his humiliation and ascension, are to be taken as the divinest and most authoritative teaching of Providence, and duty, and hope; suitable and refreshing alike to the infant and the sage; attractive alike to the love of innocent hearts, and the penitence of the worn and guilty. And it is precisely on account of their variance from this standard that the restricted use of the older Scriptures, as media of religious instruction, will be advocated.

Even if every thing that is demanded respecting the divine origin of the Hebrew Scriptures were conceded; if they not only contained but actually constituted a revelation; it would be altogether inconsiderate to conclude that they are therefore a fit instrument for early instruction now. No one can deny to God the power of giving a temporary revelation, adapted exclusively to some particular stage of human improvement; and that which is temporary must, some time, become obsolete,—must be transformed from a means of instruction into a record of history,—totally superseded by new and nobler conceptions, gifts of a later Providence, or growths of a later civilization. Thus, at least, the Apostle of the Gentiles thought; and, however much Paul might indulge his countrymen with reasonings from their ancient Scriptures, he was silent of the law and the prophets when he pleaded before Gentiles on the Areopagus at Athens, and summed up the Christian doctrine in this,—that we are all the offspring of God, and

brothers of the risen Jesus. Even upon the highest doctrine of inspiration, then, there would be reason to pause, before we framed our instructions on the Old Testament writings.

But if, with all their general historic truthfulness, these writings are, almost without exception, of unknown authorship, and therefore of unknown inspiration; if their antiquity carries them beyond the reach of all outward evidence of authority; if many of them are the venerable, but human, relics of a literature produced by a half-barbarous nation in wholly barbarous times; if they contain the ideas, the passions, the moral sentiments, of a simple but savage people; if they give expression to notions of right and wrong imbibed amid constant bloodshed, and to a religion which was without expectation of a future life; if among its hymns are the strains of a penitent adulterer, and its aphorisms the wisdom of an exhausted voluptuary,—is it not appalling that such an aggregate should be placed in youthful hands as the reflection of the Divine purity and the oracle of the infinite Intelligence?—that every effort should be made to gather round it the unquestioning reverence of early years, and form the moral taste from its mixed elements? The party-cry of the present day about scriptural education demands great plainness of speech, and I scruple not to denounce it as a demoralizing and corrupting superstition.

This indiscriminate use of the Bible, as an infallible whole, fills the mind with a system of confused and self-contradictory ideas, both of religion and of morals. What other result can possibly ensue from the attempt to cement into one structure of thought the conceptions of writers scattered over many centuries, and living, feeling, thinking, under every variety of condition, and in opposite states of civilization? As well might you propose to frame a system out of every thing that was ever written in Latin, as out of every thing that was ever written in Hebrew; and form a creed by borrowing here an article from the mytho-

logy of Virgil, there another from the speculations of Cicero; first a prodigy from the exaggerations of Livy, then a thought from the wisdom of Tacitus; now a reflection of the philosophic Seneca then a superstition of the gross and fierce Tertullian. The religion of the Romans from Romulus to Julian underwent no more change than the religion of the Israelites from Moses to Malachi; and there is as much unity between the Jupiter of Homer and the Deity of Plato, as there is between the Jehovah of Abraham and the infinite Father of Christ. If the Scriptures were not read habitually with the obtuse eye of familiarity and prejudice, every one would instantly perceive, that the Theism of the Hebrews was of very gradual formation; that the sublimest representations of the divine unity and omniscience and universal government appear, for the first time, in the prophets and later psalms; that the Mosaic theology went no further than to limit the national worship to Jehovah, without denying the existence, or interfering with the local rights, of other deities; that the most rude and puerile conceptions of God, ascribing to him the imbecilities of human nature and the passions of savage life, fill the more ancient of the Israelitish writings; that remorse, jealousy, offended pride, rage, sensible pleasure in the odour of sacrifice, personal susceptibility to the influence of praise and gifts, are literally attributed to the Creator. He descends to wrestle bodily with a patriarch; he commits an acknowledged error in creating men, and is obliged to destroy them by the flood, and try the effect of recommencing the race; he enters into competition with the divinities of Egypt, and the contest is reiterated and long. There is every evidence of which the case admits, that these are no figures of speech, but strictly the ideas of the writers. And if it were not so, if they were mere accommodations to the minds of an uncultivated people, for that very reason they are not accommodated to the minds of a cultivated people: that they were qualified for use in a savage age is only stating, in another form, that they are disqualified for use in purer

times. Nay, that we ever resort to such modes of excusing them proves that they revolt us,—that they no longer command our sympathy. To defend them thus is to disown them: why, then, insist on dragging our children's minds through that which, we admit, would contaminate our own? —why employ, in the teaching of our families, that for which we justly claim the merit of being good for barbarians? The historical value of the Hebrew annals I do not deny: the simple beauty of their pastoral traditions will delight, so long as the human heart remains unchanged: the rugged sublimity of their triumphal hymns will never cease to overpower the imagination with a kind of physical awe: the tender and romantic incidents, which are interwoven, as domestic episodes, in the great epic of their history, will prove to the refreshment of all times that the simpler affections of our nature are immortal: and to study the slow development, under influences very peculiar, of the true idea of God; to follow it as it expanded from the image of a national idol-hating being, to that of the Sole and Universal Ruler of creation; to trace its moral refinement and growing effulgence from age to age, till it rose in the majestic orb, whose spiritual light warmed and ripened the soul of Christ,—is one of the most interesting objects of intellectual research. But to take up the series of writings which mark this progress, as an immutable system of religious instruction; to give it a didactic as well as an historical importance; to attribute the same infallibility to the gross materialism of its earlier, and the divine spirituality of its later parts; to refer our children indifferently to Jacob and to Christ; to bid them go and learn devotion, now amid the yells of exterminating war in Gibeon, and then at the feet of the Prince of Peace in Nazareth;—can only produce the most bewildered conception of Deity, and the most unsteady operation of the devotional sentiment; a fusion into the same mind of the elements of the savage and of the angel. Oh! why should the gentle heart of childhood be made to shrink and cower before the vision of a

Deity, with an arm laid bare in vengeance, and garments dyed in blood? Why be compelled to struggle into a fancied veneration for a Being, to whom, amid a certain physical sublimity, scarce an untainted moral excellence is ascribed? Why have to wrestle, as with a sin, against the doubt of reason, whether the only Good of whom Jesus was the image, when he healed the sick, and uplifted the penitent, and welcomed the alien, and silenced the storm, and raised the dead, could indeed be the same that taught his people the lessons of indomitable hate, and declared that he would let loose on them his fury, because they only half performed the work of carnage? Till this superstition be abated, a great portion of the power of religion will be employed in bidding successful defiance to the holiest sentiments of the conscience and the heart.

Nor is the system of morals, which the mind will construct for itself from such incongruous materials, of any better or more consistent character than the ideas of God.

If I were required to select from history the three systems of morality most at variance with each other in their general spirit and tendency, I should make my choice within the limits of the Bible, and name the teachings of Moses, of Solomon,* and of Christ. They are respectively perfect representations of the sacerdotal, the Epicurean, and the spiritual type of human duty. The tendency of the reputed Mosaic writings is to raise to enormous exaggeration the reader's estimate of the ceremonial parts of morality; to force on him a total forgetfulness of the real character of institutional duties, as mere symbols for expressing the power of the great primary obligations, and destitute of all intrinsic value; to train in him a conscience

* In designating the several portions of the Jewish Scriptures by the names with which they are commonly associated, I do not intend to express any opinion as to their real authorship. For my present purpose it is not necessary to call in question the date assigned to the Book of Ecclesiastes, or to relieve the mission of Moses from responsibility for the Levitical institutions, by pointing out the traces of their slow and late formation.

at once scrupulous and lax, slavish and presumptuous,—rigid without purity, sensitive without delicacy, timid without love. Even in the Decalogue, the observance of a holiday is put down in the same rank with the most permanent and solemn duties; and the prohibition to pick up sticks and light fires on one day of the week, is on a par with the enactments against theft, murder, and adultery. Whatever necessity may be thought to exist, in certain states of society, and for the sake of peculiar theological ideas, for such an ill-proportioned distribution of the divine authority of duty, surely there is no pretext for maintaining it now; surely we need no longer pervert the natural reverence of our children's minds, and turn them aside from the love of whatever things are pure and good, to the awe of forms, whose only use is to express such love; surely there is no divine obligation upon us to teach them sanctimonious criticism on the infringements of the Sabbath, instead of keeping their secret vigils near the fountains of their own hearts. The mischiefs of this formal morality are exceedingly serious: it links together in the conscience things trivial and great, and forces them into partnership for better and worse,—for breach as well as for observance. Touch one, and you touch all; the light temptation to a Sabbath gaiety gains a terrific leverage, and upsets the whole structure of moral obligation; the sanctities of life are at the mercy of the remorse of a fictitious conscience.

It is known to every one, that there is a school of philosophy which refers all human conduct and feelings to to self-love as their origin, and delights in explaining away every appearance of disinterestedness which may present itself in the character: this absurd and degrading scheme is called the *selfish system*. There is also a school of moralists who base the obligation of virtue upon its utility to the performer; who reduce, in fact, all excellence under the head of prudence, and conceive him to be the most perfectly good man who has the most far-sighted and steady view to his own interests. You will perceive that I refer to

the lowest form of the *doctrine of utility*,—a form in which whatever is really true and valuable in its fundamental principle is concealed by revolting error. It has so happened that these two systems, of which the one is a theory respecting what men's objects *actually are*,—the other a representation of what they *ought to be*, have frequently met in the person of the same advocates, and thus become almost hopelessly confounded together. They have, for the most part, been favourites with sceptical interpreters of human nature and life,—though not without supporters amongst philosophers of remarkable intellectual power; and they have almost uniformly excited the disgust and hostility of religious moralists. Even Paley is hardly an exception to this remark; for though he was a clergyman, and rendered services never to be forgotten to the preparatory evidences of religion,—though in his work on moral philosophy there are theological formulas, to save appearances, and dress up its laxity in the drapery of sanctity,—his was not a mind to be deeply penetrated with the religious sentiment: his muscular sagacity did good service in repairing the outside of the temple; but he was not the inspired hierophant to interpret the divine spirit within. By others, filled with a more generous and devout enthusiasm, every species of assault has been made upon the systems I have named. They have been described as a libel on the best affections of our nature, as bearing kindred with the doctrine of annihilation, as at variance with the whole spirit of Christ's affectionate morality. This is not the time to weigh the precise force of these objections; with which, however, you will perceive that I feel a certain degree of sympathy. I would simply point attention to the fact, that they proceed mainly from divines and religious philosophers; yet, if there be any extant works which more than others contain the selfish and utilitarian sentiments in a form naked and unblushing, they are the reputed writings of Solomon. Bentham seems likely never to recover from the disgrace of having recommended benevolence as a

good speculation; yet the Hebrew king had said before him: "A kind man doeth good to his own self;" and "The benevolent soul shall be enriched."* The philosopher of London was thought to be a low-minded Epicurean because he said that all pleasures were good, and proposed to economize them well; but the sage of Jerusalem before him had published the most sensual of all possible perversions of this sentiment: "There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make himself enjoy good in his labour,"† How many severities of censure had the modern teacher to encounter for his supposed mean opinion of human nature! yet saith the preacher of old: "Behold! this have I found, counting one by one to find out the account (which still my soul seeketh, but I find not), one good *man* among a thousand have I found; but a good *woman* among all have I not found."‡ What declaration did the utilitarian patriarch of the nineteenth century hear respecting the supposed alliance of his system with the creed of annihilation! yet the royal teacher had exclaimed: "That which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them; as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath, so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast."§ Nay, sentiments are found in this writer which it would be impossible to parallel by any thing in the history of Epicurism; which tend to the destruction of all moral distinctions; which lay wisdom and folly on a level with each other; which deliberately scorn and restrain all enthusiasm of virtue, and sum up all good counsel in precepts of voluptuousness and the doctrine of death.

Now, what is to make these sentiments safe and salutary in the Bible, and shocking and poisonous everywhere else? And how can they form one consistent whole, when meeting with the same reverence in the same mind with the morality

* Prov. xi. 17, 25. † Eccles. ii. 24.
‡ Eccles. vii. 27, 28. Wellbeloved's translation and note.
§ Eccles. iii. 19.

of Christ? Oh! what a refreshment to our fevered heart to turn from the jaded sensualist of the palace, to the holy Prophet in the villages of Galilee!—to quit the morals of the appetites, and, at the breathing of a spirit so divine, to feel that our souls have wings again! The sense of responsibility,—forgotten in the casuistry of self-indulgence,—steals back to its secret throne; the faith in disinterestedness, conjured out of the heart by the enchantments of sophistry, streams on us from the eye of Jesus; and dim feelings of the just, the noble, and the holy, dilating into sublime and reverential aspirations, swell within us, like the very breath of God, at the tones of that sacred voice. To whom, then, but to him should we and our children go?

The parents, then, who would guard the moral purity of their child,—who would not wish him to find access anywhere to impressions and premature knowledge of wrong, from which they would religiously screen him in a newspaper or a tale; who would dread his contracting a sympathy with ferocious and intolerant passions; who would maintain his estimate of duty wisely graduated, and not suffer him to confound secondary with primary obligations, the forms and means of duty with its ends and substance; who would bring him to acquire his ideas of God to one pure and consistent school; who would mix no taint of selfishness with his morality, of sceptical contempt with his interpretations of men, of ignoble despondency with his conceptions of life and death,—will be cautious in their use of the ancient Scriptures, and permit no unregulated access to them within their house. Of course there will be a clamour; but their duty is not to the bigot-neighbour, but to the child at home.

And surely the distinction is plain and of easy application, —that the disciple is to seek his *personal religion* at the feet of Christ, while he resorts to the Hebrew writings for the materials of his *historical theology*. The children who loved and trusted Jesus, the followers who looked upon his

living face, and were drawn by the power of so heavenly a sanctity to a career of heroic duty, were assuredly in a position not of "religious destitution," but of highest religious privilege. And in a like position,—so far as it can be recovered now,—is every mind placed which is brought to him through the record of parable and miracle, and trained to see in him the true image of divine perfection. Let him be presented as the solitary guide,—the single rule and standard by which to think of the God who reigns in heaven, and the life we should live on earth; and whatever in the earlier strains of poet or of prophet is in harmony with this, may then be adopted to enrich its lessons, and give them more various access to the heart; while all that is repugnant to it is scrupulously disconnected from the idea of God and duty, utterly stripped of their approval and authority, and thrown among the human elements of the past. The great end of spiritual education is to direct the mind's admiration and reverence aright; to prevent the intrusion of any gross and false homage in place of a true worship; to impart a Christian conception of what is noble and beautiful; to present life to the young aspirant as a scene of sacred responsibility, in which the pursuit of natural good is to be regulated by a holy law, and subordinated to the aim at a holy perfectness. To attain this end, the *Christian* element of the Scriptures must be disengaged from all else; their principles of universal religion be extracted from the temporary and local matter with which they are combined; the essential obligations of human nature be discriminated from the accidental positions of Judaism, and the living Providence of the universe separated from the obsolete politics of Palestine. Perform this analysis; and, though you "mutilate the Scriptures" you teach Christianity: omit it; and, though you worship the gospel, you miss the evangelic faith. Do this for your children, and the children of our people; and, though they never heard of Canticles or grew familiar with the curses of David, Christ will receive them in his arms: neglect it;

and, though they venerate every letter of the Bible, it will be to them a wooden idol that cannot deliver; and the Lord of conscience may yet disown them, and say,—Depart from me, I never knew you.

Thus, by leaving the heart alone with the Christian's sole model of perfection, and not by any indoctrination into a technical and narrow creed, will the obligations of parentage meet their wise and adequate fulfilment. Thus will the adoration of God impart its due energy and loftiness to the conscience, and his presence brood over the mind like an atmosphere of transparent holiness. Thus alone shall we suffer little children to come unto Jesus, and make them fit to be his chosen representatives of the kingdom of heaven. Thus shall we ourselves maintain a soul most faithfully and tenderly directed towards God, and act here as those guardian-angels of infancy who ever behold in love the face of the Father who is in heaven.

IRELAND AND HER FAMINE.

TO THE

RIGHT HONORABLE LORD JOHN RUSSELL,

WHO HAS LONG LABOURED TO EFFACE FROM THE RELIGIONS OF IRELAND THE POLITICAL MEMORIALS OF CONQUEST,

AND FROM WHOSE HIGH COURAGE AND CAPACITY IS NOW EXPECTED SUCH A SEARCHING REVISION OF HER SOCIAL STATE AS SHALL RECALL HER PROPRIETORS TO THEIR DUTY,

PERMIT HER SOIL TO VINDICATE ITS FERTILITY,

AND RAISE HER PEASANTRY TO HOPE,

THIS DISCOURSE,

PREPARED IN COMPASSION FOR HER MISERIES,

IS INSCRIBED,

WITH SENTIMENTS OF RESPECTFUL TRUST,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

THE hasty sketch traced in the following pages of the condition to which Ireland has been brought by the historical antecedents of the present age, has no pretension to novelty. Its truth would perhaps appear, in ordinary times, too familiar to justify publication. To the painful crisis which renders it seasonable, it owes whatever freshness the hearers of the Discourse attributed to it. As it seemed to harmonize with the generous disposition of the congregation,* the Author could not refuse it the chance of ripening, in a wider field, some further store of rational pity for a wronged and wretched people.

LIVERPOOL, *February* 6, 1847.

* The collection amounted to £500.

IRELAND AND HER FAMINE.*

"All Joy is darkened, the Mirth of the Land is gone. When thus it shall be in the midst of the Land among the People, there shall be as the shaking of an Olive-tree, and as the gleaning Grapes when the Vintage is done."—ISAIAH xxiv. 11, 13.

NOTHING more plainly marks the difference between a noble religion and a weak superstition, than the aspect under which great calamities appear before them. Both, indeed, as the stroke descends, must humbly bow beneath it, and own the pressure of the Almighty hand. Both will awake from their dream of security and ease, and start at the image of life bared of its customs, like the well-clad traveller stript of his raiment by the way, and turned off naked on the snow. Both will feel, that they must "talk no more so exceeding proudly," but subside upon that common pity, in whose soil the ultimate fibres of our humanity are nourished. But with this impression of the instant, an unthinking devotion stops; seeing in the event simply a providential visit, with demand of a transitory duty; and when that has been faithfully discharged, permitting the course of affairs to resume their old direction, till brought to some dread pause again. The shut and dreamy eye of monkish piety can only gaze with submission on the ground. Religion, with open and uplifted look of reason, *sees* the blow while it falls, as well as *feels* it when it comes; scans its course, while bruised beneath its weight; doubts itself, while trusting God; and is so slow

* Paradise Street Chapel, Liverpool, Sunday, January 31, 1847.

to lay the whole burden of sorrow to his charge, as to say, "What, Lord, have we done, or what forgot to do, that thou dost afflict us so?" In dealing with the ills of this world, it behoves us to make use of the Eternal name with a cautious and holy fear; to cover no unworthy thing with that infinite shelter; and while we rest under its protection in our sorrows, to seek there for no refuge from our sins. Few are the occurrences upon this earth, which can be thrown at the feet of Providence alone. In the mere aspects of nature indeed, which, from the absence of premonitory sign, we cannot foresee or control; when genial suns look out from the winter skies, and untimely snows hide the young summer's green; in the earthquake's crash, when it rocks our cities into dust; in the tornado, ploughing through the forest, and sweeping the fields; in the solemn thunder, which the steersman hears talking at midnight with the rolling sea; we recognize the soliloquy of God: we have not a word to answer him, we can but cross our hands upon the breast, and say, "It is the Lord that passeth by." But rarely does he stand apart from us, and act thus awfully alone. He has committed this province of his universe to us, and in almost all its affairs, human agency is mingled with the divine: in its good, some faithfulness of ours makes harmony with his mercy; in its ill, some guilt creates a discord from the tones of his severer wisdom. When this is so, we have other lessons to learn from the bitterness of experience than those of bare submission: it not only smites our affections, but reproves our will; in addition to self-humiliation and denial, it demands self-judgment: and to lose ourselves wholly in resignation and in pity, is to abdicate our responsibilities, and to refuse, in the darkness of the present, the openings of light for the future. Not indeed that we are to lend ourselves to the shallow and barren impiety, which, without regard to the Providential order of causes and effects, hunts through every public disaster for traces of penal judgment; which affects to be the con-

fidant of the Everlasting Will, and to discern the motives that interrupt the beneficence of the seasons, and arm the elements with fear. Such arrogancy, while pretending to expound the Divine wisdom, does but unconsciously expose the depth of human folly and weakness. Looking upon the face of this awful universe, it can see only the reflection of its own poor hatreds: and to the breadth of nature and the strides of history it has nothing to apply but the inch-rule of ignorance and the false measures of passion.* It is plain what sort of world we should have, were it disposed of in this temper, instead of being ruled by One, whose Image blessed of old the villages of Samaria with mercy, and who ever repeats, to mortals meddling with the fires of heaven, "Ye know not what spirit ye are of." Only so far as present afflictions are clear *consequences*, according to the known laws of our life and lot, from the past unfaithfulness of men, can we draw from them any moral inference, and regard them as an expression of the justice of God. Within these limits, however, some profitable lessons may be learned.

In the appalling calamity which is now visiting a large portion of this empire, moral causes are so manifestly blended with physical, that the current language of Providential recognition is apt to sound like an evasion of human accountability. It is a shocking profanation to refer to the Highest Will that which is the plain consequence of our failures and neglects; to substitute complacent trust for docile penitence; and to give with mere impulsive charity, without reckoning the forgotten claims of past justice. No doubt it is by a hand other than human, that a material article of food has been struck with sudden decay; and whatever privations are the necessary con-

* For a recent and truly humiliating example of this *πάντολμος ἀμαθία*, see the correspondence of Mr. Hoare with Lord Robert Grosvenor, in relation to his Lordship's political estimate of the Irish Roman Catholic Church. Mr. Hoare attributes the potato blight to the Maynooth grant!

sequences of this dispensation, are fitly owned as heaven-sent, and regarded as occasions only for mutual help and resignation. But the consequences which were *not* inevitable, it is wicked to call Divine; and how great a proportion of the whole these are, may be seen when we compare England with Ireland at the present moment. Both alike have suffered the loss of the same crop; the *physical* visitation, which is the hand of God, has dealt the same measure to both. Yet to the one it brings only pressure,—to the other ruin; to the one, privation,—to the other, famine; to the one anxiety,—to the other, despair. The whole amount of this difference is due to social and moral causes, and remains as a reproach to the empire, not as a shadow from the Most High.

Whence the astonishing contrast between two countries, whose hills every clear sunrise brings within sight of one another; whose interests are inseparably locked together; and which have lived for ages under the same sway? Nature has not ordained it. The two islands, as they lay at first unpeopled in the sea, looked like twin sisters of creation, dressed in the same green mantle, screened from the heats by the same canopy of clouds, and guarded by the baying of the same watchful storms. To no native wealth or grace can the one pretend, in which the other may not vie; and every want and blemish in the one is balanced by some equal imperfection in the other: so that, could they have changed places, no one can doubt that they might have changed lots. Nor is there any plea for saying, that the people drifted by the winds of history upon their shores are essentially different. Taken one by one, even now, they present only harmonious varieties of a single type; and the fact that the Scottish people are of the very same race, yet differ from them more widely than ourselves, is enough to show that the imaginary difficulties of lineage are pliant under the discipline of events. Yet, though made by birth of the same blood, set by nature within the same latitudes, led by conversion to the same

religion, we have been brought by social agencies into a contrast of condition to which the world presents no ancient or modern parallel. You might travel from Siberia to Normandy, and scarcely find such extremes to compare as Tipperary and Middlesex. If a shapeless cabin were cut out of the Galtee hills, and set down in the court of London Exchange, it would be too true a type of the human differences which have been permitted to separate these provinces. Europe presents no poverty lodged in such holes, fed with such meals, clothed in such rags, cheerful under such hopeless privations, as you find in the one: no wealth so solid, no comfort so established and diffused, no habits of order so fixed, no provision for the future so anxious and abundant, as in the other. England is known over the world as the extreme of opulent civilization; Ireland, as the outcast of hungry wretchedness. Along the great rivers of every continent, on the bays of every productive coast, in the isles of every rich archipelago, British factories rise, and bills of exchange speak for us a few telling words: on the same spot appears a slouching figure, with stick and bundle, and careless speech, never far from a blessing or a curse, whose aspect publishes our shame. The Genius of his country is like a mocking Spirit to ours. Full of the wild-fire of life, rich in the unwrought elements of humanity, quick to passion, mellow in affection, deep in humour, he flies over the earth, to track the sedate and well-dressed Genius of England, and spread out the shadow of mendicancy in the train of his sumptuous advance. "Ha! ha!" says the laughing spirit, "go where you will, you old impostor, and I'll be with you, and sit at your door; and men shall look on me and on you; for the face of us two can tell no lies." And so, along the St. Lawrence and the Mississippi, on the railways of France and Germany, it is published, that England,—with unrivalled resources, with indomitable perseverance, with faculties for governing unsurpassed even by Ancient Rome, with a people abhorrent of oppression

and detesting slavery, with a constitution practically free and a religion singularly earnest,—cannot, with centuries at its command, organize the barbaric elements it rules, and reduce the beggary of a nation at its gates.

Among the complications in which this phenomenon is involved, may be discerned perhaps one or two leading agencies, curious and interesting to trace. The greatest difficulties in the sad problem lie deep, I am persuaded, in the influences of the Past. Ireland has not shared the history of England; yet it is under the methods of rule which that history has created and rendered fit. With us, the whole State is pervaded by the principle of *Self-government.* A larger proportion of the affairs of human life are left to Individual Will in Great Britain than in any other European country: and of those which are withdrawn from private control, a greater number are committed to municipal and local authorities, than elsewhere. In the levying of taxes, the administration of justice, the control of public works, the duties of ædileship, of public instruction, and religious worship, an immense work is committed to the people themselves, in vestries, in sessions, in companies, in corporate bodies, in congregations. The civic authority is not in London; it is everywhere: in its ordinary, healthy operations, it goes on of itself, and says nothing to the metropolitan executive; whose existence is only recognized for the removal of occasional obstruction, or the increase of defective powers. This characteristic of our country, which is its true political glory, cannot be simply taken up and imitated elsewhere. Tried on an unprepared field, it becomes barren, ridiculous, or corrupt. It requires peculiar aptitudes and sentiments in the people who are to be submitted to the experiment; and is far more the *result* of political qualification, than the *cause* of it. Under the Tudors, the English, I imagine, had no peculiar faculty of this sort. It was the noble struggle of the Puritans against the Stuarts that trained this people. *That* was the grand apprenticeship of the middle classes of England to the

business of civil government; of military defence; of foreign diplomacy; of ecclesiastical order. Being compelled to dismiss their professional rulers, and take their affairs into their own hands, they conquered the mysteries of administration, acquired the habits of authority, and became penetrated with the reverence for law. And that which the social revolution effected in England, the religious conflict achieved in Scotland. The Presbyterian democracy which John Knox called into existence, demanded and created the same qualities; handed over education and religion to the regulation of parishes; and filled every province with practical and working interest in the highest concerns of human life. In those grave and glorious times you find the school to which Great Britain is indebted for a larger number of inhabitants capable of serving the state, and, if need were, of *ruling* it, than could be gathered perhaps out of all Europe besides. Though *there* also, on the larger scale of continental experience, the same truth receives some illustration. Wherever there has been a popular struggle, either civil or religious, by which voluntary organizations have worked their way up and enthroned themselves among the old prerogatives,—in Holland, in Belgium, in Northern Germany,—we find a ripeness for provincial government, which even France, first by her treatment of the Huguenots, then by the military character of her great revolution, twice lost the opportunity of acquiring. Ireland, declining all partnership both in the Revolution and the Reformation, missed this noble discipline; never learned the lesson of self-rule; remains to this hour helpless, distracted, aimless; and still requires, no less than in Strafford's days, methods of centralization to which the altered habits of our State give the semblance of anachronism and impossibility. The middle classes, on whom the stress of self-government must be laid, do not there exist; and in their absence, the functions of the magistracy have been confined to a proprietary imposed by conquest, the object of original

and hereditary distrust. The Law, thus early associated with coercion, has never become the emblem of Justice, The ruling classes have not even had the chance of success usually forced upon a conquered country. They have not been *left alone* with the governed mass committed to them, so as to adjust themselves into settled relations of confidence with them: but, being always backed by imperial force, have been entrusted with the power, without the natural responsibilities of government. Meanwhile, among the people themselves, there has prevailed a Religion which gives no exercise whatever to any administrative faculty; a religion of obedience without command; in which it is not even given to a man to manage his own spiritual affairs, much less to touch the Church; in which his worship itself is done for him, and his salvation needs a sacerdotal conveyance. And thus it is that a system incapable of transference to a soil quite unprepared, has disappointed the expectations of England, and left the wayward misery of Ireland without control. That unhappy land, needing centralization, has been municipally treated; and, in the reaction of inevitable failure, it has remained a camp, instead of becoming a country.

A more conspicuous, but not more real, cause of the permanent social condition of the sister island, is to be found in the criminal neglect of their obligations by the proprietors of the soil:—a neglect so serious in its aggregate results, that, were it not for the long indifference and connivance allowed to it by the government, it might be held sufficient to weaken all further title to forbearance. It is a principle of natural justice, and of English constitutional usage, that there can be no absolute private property in land: that the State simply administers its possessions by the hands of private individuals, conceding to them privileges of use, alienation and bequest on condition of certain services rendered back;—establishing them in specified rights over it, as against others, but never as against itself. Chattel property and mere money in the purse have been

considered as the characteristic of the Jew and the Alien, about the management of which no public question need be asked; while real estate is the citizen's trust, over which his country keeps a watch, and Justice herself stands ready with the voice of approbation or of anger. Its owners are virtually officers of the Commonwealth, entrusted with the gravest elements of its wellbeing, and expected to perform certain social obligations inseparable from their position. They are in fact the natural lords and rulers of their neighbourhood, morally responsible for its good order, its wise economy, and the essential equity of prevalent relations among its people. It is only on these understood conditions, that society can undertake to protect hereditary estate: and of all these conditions the very first in order undoubtedly is, that the land *shall support its people;* that the cultivator shall live, before the owner may gather; that no rent can be touched, till labour has been fed; seeing that the spade and the plough give an earlier and more indefeasible title than the parchment-roll. That these primary conditions have been overlooked and violated by a large proportion of Irish proprietors, is manifest on the most cursory glance at the permanent features of their country. Without appealing to the wide reign of death and desolation now, take only one or two ordinary and standard facts, and consider what they imply. About a million of small occupiers have under tillage something more than their rood or two of con-acre: they have perhaps four or five acres, and raise a few oats, and have poultry about their cabins, and their cow in the field. Here, you will say, is some wholesome and comfortable produce, on which the children may thrive, though meat is never seen upon the board. But not a touch of these good things ever crosses their lips from year's end to year's end. The eggs are gathered into the basket for sale; the pig is driven off to market; the corn is stacked, but they never see the meal; and morning and night the farmer's wife or daughter milks the cow, and the bare-legged

children that run after her are familiar with the frothy look, but do not know the taste of it. Day by day, while labouring for the creation of abundance, they all return to the dry potatoes and the pinch of salt. The rent-roll takes the butter and the corn; the agent's horse must have the oats;—the spade may dig its roots and be thankful. Nay, even of these so scanty is the supply beyond the margin of the rent, that for the months of July and August of every common year, when the old crop is exhausted and in decay, and the new unfit to raise, the miseries of famine spread over the land. The rotting food that was thrown aside is gathered up again; the pot is boiled once a day instead of twice; the half poisonous charlock is plucked from the hedge and eaten, as you may know by the faces as jaundiced as its flower: and, after watching his plot every morning and thinking how slow the growth, the peasant loses patience as the children cry, digs up the green potatoes no larger than a marble, and by ruinous unwholesomeness and waste rescues his family from despair.

Again, have we not a right to require of the possessors of the soil, that it shall be made to yield some fair proportion of its attainable produce? Is it not an admitted principle, that tribes who live by hunting have no title against a people that will till the ground?—that the natural gifts of God are not to be kept out of use by any prescriptive claims of man? And does not the same rule which forbids to leave the earth an uncultivated wilderness, debar men from making it little better than a cultivated weed-bed? Now so wretched is the economy which has grown up in Ireland, that more than two-thirds of her population are engaged in raising food (such as it is) for the whole; while the entire maintenance of Great Britain is produced by the labour of less than a third of the inhabitants. Yet, though the fields, fertile as our own, are thus doubly manned, they scarcely yield one-third of the produce on which a skilful culture might rely. It cannot possibly be pretended that this is not the landlord's fault. It arises mainly, though

not wholly, from the system of *nominal* rents,—a system which every owner may, by a mere act of will, extinguish at any instant upon his estate. When there is a holding to let, so intense is the competition for land, that twenty-four hours cannot elapse without fifty offers for the ground: it usually goes to the highest bidder, on terms preposterously above the probable produce of the soil. The landlord knows that he shall never get this sum: but he takes all the value that is raised over and above the tenants' potatoes; registers the difference as a debt against him; and avails himself of the chance of a fortunate year, or of the occupier's incidental gains, to pay himself the rest. Hence, the cultivator dares not save, or show any thing but the ever-ragged edge of his property. Not a shilling of capital can venture to appear in his fields: the slightest improvement in his negligent and wasteful culture will bring down a fresh claim upon him; and he is safe only on the verge of pauperism, and with a farm that quiets the suspicions of cupidity by its very look of beggary. And this, it must be remembered, takes place in a country where the occupancy of land is identical with the holding of existence itself. The cottier turned off an estate becomes thenceforth a mendicant till he dies: for the class of field-labourers for the wages of subsistence does not there exist. When the tenant-farmer is cut off in his prime, the neighbours will keep his widow on the land for the remainder of the season, by working for her in her fields in the dusk of evening, and after the chapel service on the Sunday morning. But when the time comes round, she must go from the plot where her good-man toiled; and, for the rest of their days, she and the children must beg their bread. Thus, nothing lies between the fields and death. And how then can we deny that the ejecting landlord, in Ireland, performs an act quite different from the mere notice to quit in England? Does he not take away the last plank? Can you wonder that he is regarded, in the passion of despair, as himself beginning the game of life against life, and

provoking the guilty retaliation? And until the fatal connection is divorced between the land-tenure and the life-tenure, will not the statute-law be engaged in a hopeless struggle with the earliest law of our humanity? The rights of property will not bear the strain of a conflict with the affections of nature and the fear of death. When the outcry against English misgovernment comes over to us here, whether in plaints of misery, or in tones of exasperation, assuredly it is for *us* to own its truth. But it is a cry which the Irish Landlord has, of all men, the least right to raise; for the misgovernment has mainly consisted in not constraining *him;* in leaving him to *rule* under semblance of law, instead of *serving* the realities of justice. There are, in truth, so many partners in this old historic wrong, that crimination is out of place, except as involved in the very definition of a cure. The retribution with which nations are visited, is ever cumulative: after a few generations, the evil attains an enormity disproportioned to the fault of any living men; and the censures, just in their distribution over ages, sound harsh in their immediate fall. The only temper suited to all who share in the responsibilities of this time, is that not of mutual accusation, but of universal confession and hearty zeal in better ways. The repentance of society, like its sins, is at best an affair of tedious centuries; and the penance is prolonged by every failure in disinterestedness, on the part of government or people.

This, then, my fellow-Christians, this is the land on which the blight of an unparalleled dearth has fallen; in which the scant supplies are but as "the shaking of the plucked olive-tree, and as the gleaning grapes, when the vintage is done." It scarcely needs a reporter to tell us what is going on in its poor-houses, its villages, its towns: nor does the soul of Christian pity require a picture of the unimaginable horrors that make its very mountains and valleys groan. If the axe and the hammer drop from the wasted hand of manhood on the public works,—which are the sole hope

of life ;—if the mother has to carry off upon her back the fainting youth who has earned for her the sustenance he wanted for himself ; if the ghastly look and staggering gait of famine is terrible among the crowds upon the road, you know what must be hidden in the cabins retired from reach ; in which there is no *man* to work ; only Age which, in greatest need, never thought of sinking thus ; or Widowhood without a hope ; and Children with the mirth all gone, with even the stout cry sunk into the feeble wail, and that drag upon the face, which even Death can never smooth into placidity again. In the dark night, the woman, hearing an awful sound, and having no rush-light to show the way to help, tears a bit of thatch from the roof, and kindles it in the turf-embers, to see her husband die ; his life and its fitful flame flicker out together. Oh ! at a time like this, who shall say that we "Saxons" have no hearts to help? Who shall tell us, of that perishing race, that they are "aliens in blood, in language, in religion? The soul sickening within you at thought of the pale death that stalks abroad, compels you to know yourself *of one "blood" :* the lifted eye of tearless misery speaks to you in the great "language" which only the "alien" from humanity can fail to answer ; and the solemn anguish of compassion, the awful sense of God, the silent prayer for mercy in our need, sink us all down in *the same "religion."*

PAUSE AND RETROSPECT.

PREFACE.

THE following Sermon was preached on Sunday Morning, July 16th, on taking leave of my Congregation, previously to a year's absence, for the purposes of needful rest and foreign travel. This term, granted to me with generous indulgence, will bring the history of the present Chapel to a close: and on my return, the new Church, now in process of erection in Hope Street, will be opened for worship. Whilst to the society, and to myself alike, the services of the day stood at the commencement of a temporary separation, to me they permanently closed the sight of a place consecrated by many ineffaceable recollections. The various memories and hopes incident to such an occasion will serve to explain, on the one hand, a few allusions in the discourse, and, on the other hand, the desire of my hearers for its publication. I am well aware that it owes its interest entirely to adventitious opportunity: but the time naturally gave to the mere wish of friends a deserved authority; and I throw off the following pages in their original form, without further thought of their imperfections.

Appended to the Sermon is the substance of a speech delivered on occasion of laying the foundation-stone of Hope Street New Church: reprinted from the report in the *Christian Reformer* for June. This addition is made in compliance with a desire frequently expressed, to have, in a more convenient form, some record of a day memorable to those whom it concerned.

J. M.

LIVERPOOL, *July* 19, 1848.

PAUSE AND RETROSPECT.

"Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we may be as reprobates.—For we are glad when we are weak, and ye are strong: and this also we wish, even your perfection."—2 CORINTHIANS, xiii. 7, 9.

FRIENDS AND FELLOW-WORSHIPPERS,—

THE peculiarity of our mutual position this day, may not only allow, but require me to depart a little from the usual course of reflection and appeal. It is not my practice, as you will bear me witness, to introduce any *personal* element into the services of this place; or to turn the footstool of worship into the throne of egotism. It is my office, and my joy, to be the mere organ and vehicle of truths and sanctities, that claim and command us all; to lose myself in the solemn universe which I endeavour to interpret; to open a medium of contact between the highest spirit and the humblest want. But, to-day, I close the history of sixteen years; and the second stage of a service, which can have only a third, reaches its end. Many, whose venerable support, when I began, was as the staff of my strength, are here no more: and children, who could then notice nothing but the novelty in this place, now listen with understanding heart. The voice of young experience which then addressed you, has learned, not without the discipline of sorrow and humiliation, to tell something of

the tale of our humanity. It is impossible not to take a retrospect of the way which we have trod. Another such term,—on which, however, it were presumption to reckon,—and opportunity will be drawing to its close. The time calls for review: not in the spirit of a miserable pride, as if our work were not greater than ourselves;—nor in that of abject self-depreciation, as if such a work did not ennoble any powers that can bear it;—but with a hopeful and humble eye to effectual revision. Before you then, my hearers, in whose hearts are hid the fruits of all my work; and before Him, who alone knows its secret seed and aliment, would I render some account of my Ministry, and refer to its characteristic aims and spirit.

Nothing has been nearer to my heart, than *to substitute among you the Religion of Consciousness for the Religion of Custom.* It is quite true, and it is a truth too plain to miss, that it is the business of religion to preside over our inner world,—to rule the thoughts, to quiet the passions, to elevate the will. It is also true, and it is a truth far less understood, that the condition of that inner world itself determines our religion;—that, precisely in proportion as the affections are pure and deep, the conscience clear and strong, and the imagination familiar with great and beautiful examples,—are heavenly realities discerned, and the windows of Reason thrown open to the empyrean light. In the mind barren with selfishness, the very root is withered from which the blossom and the shade of holy hope must spring. To one who dishonours himself by sloth and excess, God becomes invisible and incredible. From him who quickens his business, or hurries in his talk, in order to push aside the whispers of a smaller but a truer voice, the awful form of Duty sorrowfully retires, and lets him believe that life is given to play his own game, and not to serve another's will. From such men, the very power of perception itself is absent: they look through no transparent medium, but through a glass clouded with earthly steams: so that, demonstrate as you

will the realities beyond, they *cannot* see. Moral and emotional disorder as effectually excludes religious truth, as intellectual mania vitiates ordinary judgment; and the best schooling will teach nothing, till the wounded nature is healed, and the fever of the soul abates. Both the theoretical doubts, and the practical deadness of religion will remain, I believe, untouched, till they are dealt with by this rule. They are but symptoms, which it is useless directly to attack, and which can vanish only with an altered mind. Till the soul attains some loftiness, by the free and faithful activity of its best powers, faith is not really possible to it: and when it has assumed this temper, misgivings will trouble it no more. Men *rise* into holy truth, as into a vision denied to the low level and sluggish atmosphere of a flat spirit: you must lift their feet upon the mountains, and make them feel the wing of the upland air, and pierce the cloud-belt that floats between earth and sky: and then, amid the wilderness of glories, they will discern the palace of the Infinite, and feel the silence of the Eternal. It is not *light* that we want, but *eye*. With our utmost labour and ingenuity of research, we can do little to increase the *outward* testimony, by which God, Perfection, Immortality, are disclosed to us. That testimony, fixed in creation and in history, is open to all men, and nearly constant for all ages: it tells its tale without our help. But we *may* waken into consciousness the faculties to which it speaks: we may touch a sense which had never revealed itself before: we may begin a low sweet music, at which the sleeping soul may turn with wondering face, and gently cross the bridge of dreams, and open at length the living eye, and say, "What world is this; and wherefore am I here?" I have ever been profoundly convinced that the ultimate source and abode of religion is in those powers of our nature which the artificial habits and ordinary culture of our civilization tend to repress; and have esteemed it the blessing and the glory of a day of prayer, not to perpetuate, but to counteract, the modes of thought, the

rules of judgment, the standards of feeling, which lower us every day. No holdfasts or securities of reasoning are of the least avail, till the fundamental reverence is reached: you must find your ground, before your anchor can be thrown. I have known from myself, and have felt for others, that when once we have descended to the true springs of devotion in our nature, doubt and fears spontaneously clear away: and whatever may befall, the solemn guiding truths are thenceforth interwoven, as a work of divine art, into the very texture of the soul, and by no access of light can be ever bleached away.

In immediate correspondence with this view, I have also wished to elicit *the moral beauty, the inherent sublimity, and the natural authority, of Christianity.* Without the full feeling of these characteristics, I have feared that an appeal to the external attestation of preternatural events would produce a feeble, or even an unhappy, impression: while, on the other hand, the largest amount of historical belief, when gained, can do no more than awaken this feeling, and bring us in discipleship to the feet of Christ. The imperfect media through which the incidents of the Advent are transmittted to our knowledge, may render it difficult to obtain assurance as to many of its external facts. But they leave no doubt as to that grand central figure, in which all that is august and tender in the religion is collected and impersonated. To look upon that form, blending the majesty of the Prophet with the sweetness of the child; to hear that voice of grace and truth, revealing the open secrets of the heart, and, with the ease of self-renunciation, giving precepts that have the depth of prayer; to watch the vicissitudes of his mind, the flush of early hope, the shade of deepening grief, the light of constant trust: to follow him to the beach, the village home, the leper's haunt, the temple courts, the upper room, the moon-lit mount, the cross, the skies;—and to feel, as he speaks to the various lot and many-coloured guilt of men, the penetration of his simplicity;—if this be not enough to

bring us to his feet, I do not think that we are of his sheep, or shall ever know his voice. If we discern the perfectness of his spirit, if we recognize it as divine, is anything wanting to the sense of its *authority?* And if we do not discern this, could any coercion of outward demonstration create the feeling? Nothing surely can have *authority* with us, save that which touches the seat of all authority,—the conscience. Hence, to harmonize the teachings of Christ with the moral intuitions of the mind, to show how they raise us to a consciousness of duty and capacity unfelt before, to clear away the confused rivalry of other images, and make it apparent that, in all human history, he stands at the unapproached summit, the mingling point of the ideal and the real; this has been the purpose I have followed with the fullest heart. We have learned to regard all minds as of one race, variously partakers of one inspiration, melting at their upper margin,—beyond the centre of their will,—into the all-comprehending Spirit, that holds them, "as the sea her waves." And such are their affinities together, that the highest which we see carries us on to a higher, in whom we believe: and thus is Christ the image and representative of God. This appreciation of Jesus, resting upon intrinsic personal ascendency of soul, being once secured, the historical limitations of his life, its human colouring with the sentiments of a nation and a time, lie outside its *religious* office, its relation to our faith and trust: they become simple matters of secular criticism; and the temporary form of the first Christianity is harmonized with its essential perpetuity. The due understanding of this form, however, being very needful to an apprehension of the spirit, it has been my care, through all the years of our connexion, to prepare for the hour of worship by one of instruction; and to present whatever light I could collect, for the reproduction in your imagination of the first age of Christian literature, and the long antecedents of Hebrew history. Teaching a little, I have learned much. And, if I think the *records*, which are the

vehicle of Christianity, less perfect than I once supposed; if they leave some things uncertain, on which I should be grateful to be assured; if the element of Hellenistic theory, and Jewish misconception, seems larger than I had thought; yet all this does but disengage the inspired Author in greatness more solitary and signal; and, by substituting for the vague gaze of reverence, a real, human view of that amazing time, fills me with a far deeper interest in the men, and a profounder trust in the religion.

Another favourite task with me has been, *to find some "soul of goodness in things evil;"* not indeed in things *morally* evil, which it is quite beyond our province to palliate and indulge, but in things *intellectually* wrong,—in those forms of opinion and worship which shock and repel us, and constitute, in our view, the errors and superstitions of Christendom. There are times, indeed, when it becomes a plain duty of sincerity, a simple expression of manly confidence in truth, to say *why* these doctrines offend us, and why we cannot listen to the invitation to exchange the simplicity of our living faith, for the perplexities of Greek, or African, or Medieval creeds. Nor have we been unmindful of this obligation, when imposed upon us by the aggression of proselytism. But, I think, we draw from error a better prize, when we make it yield us productive truth, than when we compel it to grant us barren victory. And it has ever been my delight to find out, *what it is* that endears and recommends to men representations of God and divine things, which to us appear so dark and intricate; what sentiment they touch; what want they satisfy. For my own part, I have entire and ineradicable faith in the loving instincts of pure hearts; far more than in the range and clearness of my own particular understanding. I feel assured that all minds, in proportion as they are good and faithful, attain to like proportions of things beautiful and sacred; that they mean at bottom very much the same thing; that the reason, conscience, and affection, from which faith is the immaculate birth, are not

personal accidents, different in different men, but an indivisible emanation of the infinite and illuminating Spirit; seemingly broken, indeed, by the media of transmission, into the several colours, yet the undulation still of one ethereal base, and capable of reunion into the same white flood of truth. We have always something to learn, till we have traced the beliefs which we disown and others trust, up to their inmost seat in human nature, and detected what good and holy thing it is, which they poorly struggle to express. This insight gained, we dissent no longer with the heat of a narrow antipathy, but with the quiet of a large sympathy. We become conscious of seeing only in part; aware of the immense firmament of truth in which we float, and wakeful for every new star, which the gliding heavens may reveal. It has seemed to me that thus only can a truly deep-souled and Catholic charity clearly be reached; a charity not of contemptuous indolence, "caring for none of these things"; not of constitutional good-nature, negligent of the sound heart, be there only a bland surface; of life; not of self-complacent forbearance, uttering platitudes about the innocence of error, and amiably pitying the delusions of mankind; but of genuine reverence; of joint partnership in the heritage of truth and goodness; of affectionate self-distrust and earnest outlook on a future, affluent in discovery, and sublime in harmonies.

Once more. I have sought, with an urgency of heart which I believe no failure can exhaust, to give you a sense of *the Infinite Nature of Duty*, and to sustain that temper of aspiration, in which is found the great Christian secret of blended humility and hope; of self-reverence and self-denial; of penitence and dignity; of resignation and resolve; of energy and repose. There is scarcely a truth which impresses me more deeply than this;—that Infinitude attaches not, as is generally conceived, merely to *quantities*, like Space and Time, but to certain *qualities*, as Beauty and Sanctity. The Universe, which is every where and always, has infinity of one kind; the free human Soul,

which may be fair and good, has infinity of the other. In God, the two currents of immensity mingle, and make one shoreless ocean of perfection. It is one of the signatures of our immortality, that while we may always choose the better part, we never realize the *best;* that when we have put forth a conquering resolve, the victory, in being won, loses its glory, and becomes a dream; that every thing kindles us in the future, and then fades when past,—a pure and lambent fire on the altar of our worship, but declining to light the gross fuel of our self-content. In this feature of our nature, which Christianity alone interprets aright, and which has nowhere such expression as on the countenance of Christ, we see the law of our progress, and the explanation of our griefs. It rebukes our poor attainments and mean estimates; it wakes us from the sleep of habit on the ground, and throws us off on the wing of aspiration, through the higher air. I confess then, it has been my desire to prevent your ever having what are called "the pleasures of a good conscience." I have hoped to make it clear, that these belong to the little life of the child, moving in a bounded circle of law, which obedience may entirely fill; and that they exist not in the Christian's universal empire of love, through which duty ever expands with the enlarging limits of conception, and bursting the bounds of the actual, occupies, with God, the sphere of the possible. True, there must ever be a certain *shadow* attending this temper of aspiration. But it is a shade, like that upon the soul of Christ when he said, "Peace I leave with you, *my* peace I give unto you"; a shade of sanctity, rather than of sadness; of waiting promise, rather than of barren regret; and ever implying a heavenly light in the future, throwing the darkness of our earthly form upon the past.

By such leading aims have I been guided in my attempt to reach the secret seats of Faith, Hope, Charity, and Duty. But now, having said thus much, I start back at the Image I have raised. I shrink before it abashed and

humbled. When I look at the pure ideal of the Christian Life,—when I discern in it the infinite depth of beauty,—when I reflect what sort of soul it must be to represent it truly, and impart to it in thought and deed no colour of dishonour,—I am bent down in consciousness of deformity and defect; and, did I dwell on the reflections which fill me with distrust, I should lay down a burden too noble for me to bear. But you know, my hearers, that this supreme standard is an object of endless approach, not of instant realization; that simply to keep it ever at the heart,—never to forget it,—to recur to it again and again after every failure,—and to hold it still faithfully up, regardless whom it may condemn,—is,—I will not say, all that should be required,—but at least an evidence of honest and unabated purpose. It has assuredly been my effort and resolve to keep near the fountains of truth and goodness; perhaps, too much by way of solitary thought, and communion with the great minds of the past, rather than with the lesser world abroad in the streets. But, you will allow for the diversities of gifts; and will believe that the services least copiously rendered are those in which I have felt the least confidence of good. And this one thing gratitude requires me to say, that the good providence of God has, in some way and degree, supplied my manifold defects; enabling us, at the end of this stage of our career, to look round on a Society, not weakened in numbers, or, I trust, degenerate in spirit.

And now, my hearers, I look round for the last time, upon a scene, more precious to me than any I shall see. Every week, as the sacred day comes round, will it rise before me, and mingle its picture with my prayers: I shall dwell upon the countenances and forms so dear; and wonder what answers would come, could I crowd upon you the inquiries of my heart. Others, too, as I now gaze back across the space of sixteen years,—others whom I do not see,—seem present here,—friends from whom local change can remove us no further now. In the face

of that heavenly group,—of elders who have left to us a graver life ; of children, who have been the saintly lustre of our homes ; of comrades, who have helped us in our strife ;—and, in the presence of that God, to whom all lands and times are equal ; who dwells with us at our stations, and goes not from us on the pathless seas ; who speaks to us in the wisdom and gentleness of strange tongues, but more sweetly far in the familiar music of our own ; under whom, vicissitudes are but varieties of Providence, and afflictions but the shadows of Mercy ; who is the same whether his light sleeps, as the morning, on our private homes, or streaks the atmosphere of continents with storm ; who, having sweetened the communion of mortals, will inspire the communion of saints :—I close a record which *may* never be reopened ; I leave it at the feet of Him I love and serve ;—I take of you a hopeful and grateful farewell ; and commend you to Him from whom our pathway is not hid.

ADDRESS,

On Occasion of Laying the Foundation Stone of a New Church in Hope Street,

Tuesday, May 9, 1848.

Friends and Fellow-Christians,

There are times when those who are most distrustful of themselves lose for a while the depressing consciousness of fear and frailty, and are constrained, by the bright aspect of the present, to look upon the future with joy and hope. Even when standing at the solemn birth of a great undertaking, I cannot contradict the glorious sunshine above us, and the multitude of glad faces before me, by suffering any shadow of despondency to rest upon this moment. It is a happy augury for any enterprise, when its foundation descends to its place beneath an eye so steady and a hand so firm as those of our honoured friend.* Nor is this the only encouragement that cheers the day. If to have lasted long already is evidence for an institution that it will not speedily perish; if to have deep roots in the past affords promise of blossom and fruitage in the future; then we are not without assurance of a lasting blessing on our work. The memorials of a century and a half lie beneath that stone, and constitute the autobiography of our society. There is a singular mixture of resemblance and contrast between the present occasion and the corresponding period when the chapel in which we now worship was commenced. The newspapers just

* Thomas Bolton, Esq.

deposited in the vase contain tidings of recent revolution in a neighbouring country, whose fates, interesting to all thoughtful men, are doubly so to the descendant of an exiled Huguenot. And if, when the walls of Paradise Street chapel are levelled, any similar documents should be found beneath its corner-stone, they,—the journals of 1789,—will be filled with the traces of parallel events, then equally fresh and equally portentous. Yet there are grounds to hope that the intervening sixty years have not been lost on European society, and that many a folly of the receding generation will escape repetition now. The outskirts of the last century's great storm reached even the seclusion of our own societies. In September, 1791, the chapel which we still occupy was to have been opened by Dr. Priestley; but, two months before, he was driven by the madness of riot from the town which he adorned by his virtues, his philosophy, and his fame:

> "Patriot, and saint, and sage,
> Him full of years, from his lov'd native land,
> Statesmen blood-stained, and priests idolatrous,
> By dark lies maddening the blind multitude,
> Drove with vain hate. Calm, pitying, he retired.
> And mused expectant on the coming years."

I see near me some venerable men, whose memory bears witness of that time; and others again so new to life, that its traditions sound like the old voice of history. When thus we link ourselves, on the right hand, with aged who can tell us of these things behind, and, on the left, with the child whose eye shall look forward no less far into the story of humanity, we seem to brood over a solemn expanse of time, and to feel upon the wing of our thought the breath of the 18th and the 20th century, as well as the sunshine of our own.

Under favour of this genial sky, I would detain you while I say something as to the principles and purposes to which this church is consecrated. Its claim and its

disclaim concur, as I fully believe, to justify the hopes with which you will watch its rising walls.

We dedicate it to no *priestly offices*. No mystic rites, no discipline of the secret, no magic spells of salvation, will find a shelter here. The structure rising from this spot is not destined to interpose between the soul and God, but to bring them into intimate and personal communion; not to provide a sacerdotal medium of approach, but to shut out the secular causes of forgetfulness and separation. We build a place, not for the high altar, but for the humble spirit; where the worship will be, not *for* the people, but *by* them; where the minister appears as a man amongst men, conscious of their frailties, their sorrows, their aspirations, and, only through his sad partnership in these, able to interpret them aright in preaching, and, without pretence, acknowledge them in prayer. It is but by the sympathy of mind with mind, the attraction of like to like, that the lines of supplication from each separate and silent heart converge to the place in which he stands, and finding a representative spirit there, burst into open voice. We accept here the deposit of no man's faith; but will help him, if we can, to use the talent with a faithful trust.

We dedicate this place to no individual's teaching, and erect no throne for mere *personal influence*. A stranger has but to cast his eye upon the design of this building, to see that you are raising something nobler than a lecture-room, and are inspired with a reliance which no man's wisdom can receive. You have kept it in wholesome remembrance that, while teachers are transitory, the things to be taught are imperishable; and in these days of giddy tastes and slight convictions, have brought your homage still to the eternal essence of Christian truth, not to the accident of its mutable representation. You have provided for a permanent *society of persons*, bound together by common attachment to certain sentiments and purposes which will survive the lapse of successive lives and the vicissitudes of human admiration. Unworthy should we be of the free-

hold we have received from our fathers, did we think only of a life-interest for our children.

We dedicate our church to *no creed.* It is indeed most natural, indeed inevitable, that all the successive discoverers of new doctrine, and all its simple disciples, should hold it to be everlasting; should build temples, and organize enduring institutions, to serve as its receptacles. Did they for an instant allow that it might be perishable, they would suspect it to be false. Yet who can follow the history of Christendom,—who observe the phenomena of any one period of intellectual activity,—who even register the experience of his own mind,—without a check to this unthinking faith? How plainly is it the law of Providence, that there shall be a perpetual change, be it cycle or be it progress, in the forms under which the same indestructible ideas operate in our nature! *It is time that this should be openly recognized as fact, and allowed for in our provisions for the future.* We therefore forego all attempt to fix the type of belief from age to age: and through such abstinence, do we conceive, the inevitable movements of opinion are likely to take place, less by polemic convulsion than by peaceful development.

Not,—let me be understood,—that we are, individually, without definite belief; or, collectively, without a belief strongly marked by common characteristics. We do not pretend to be mere *seekers*, with a system awaiting us in the future. We are not drawn together by the sympathies of a universal unsettledness, and the resolve to discuss an indefinite series of open questions. No, we raise here, not a school, but a church; not a hall of debate, but a shrine of God; and shall collect, not a parliament of critics, but a brotherhood of worshippers. For this end there must be a faith in each not wandering very far from the faith of all. Only where there is essentially *one* heart and mind can the many find themselves represented by the breathings of a single spirit. We do not look, therefore, for the presence of various creeds *together;* we simply offer no hindrance to

their appearing *successively*. And as we possess, not our own acquisitions only, but a heritage from predecessors; as we build, not for ourselves alone, but for our descendants; as our society runs through generations, constant indeed in their religion, but variable (may I say, *progressive?*) in their theology; we presume not to impress our own peculiarities on this church. We own the partnership of other ages in the baptism and character of this place, and will not forfeit our affinity with the ancient and the unborn to gratify the egotism of a sect. Let it not be said that we want a refuge for vagueness of conviction, an excuse for cowardice of profession. We *know* what we believe; we *love* what we believe; we plainly *tell* what we believe. I am a Unitarian; you, who will meet here from week to week, are doubtless Unitarian too; but the society of worshippers, of which we are only the *living* members, and the Church erected here, of which we shall be but *transient* tenants, these are *not* to be defined as Unitarian. To stamp them with such doctrinal name, would be to perform an act of posthumous expulsion against many noble dead whom it is an honour to revere; and perhaps to provoke against ourselves, from a future age, the retribution of a like excommunication. In refusing to commit our churches to a determinate system, we protest against the imputation of the least indifference to truth. We simply carry out, in affairs of religion, the rule which is followed in all wise endowments for the advancement of knowledge, and provision for the administration of states. Institutes of Science and halls of learning are created, not to sustain the theories of their day, however earnestly adopted by the first founders; but in the assurance that Nature and the human intellect will ever seek to converse together, and that a place which aids their meeting will be a welcome heritage to any age. The structure of Government is raised, not to preserve irrevocably the political doctrines, or even the constitutional traditions, which make a nation's momentary faith; but in simple reliance on the

permanent need of human weakness for control, and the demand of the human conscience for Law. And why may not our Churches rise, not in blind expectation of perpetuity for the present types and classifications of theology, but in pure faith that God and the human soul will ever seek each other; and that, so long as Heavenly Mercy shall stoop, and earthly aspiration rise, a court of audience for trust and prayer cannot be obsolete?

Do you ask me, then, to desist from the negative language of disclaimer, and to say positively what *is* the ground and principle of our undertaking? I reply,—A church is set up to embody and preserve a perfect image or ideal of human life. It is ultimately based upon the fact, that in each man there is a strife between his reality and his conception,—between his temptations and his resolves,—between the actual to which he descends, and the possible to which he climbs. The theatre of the one we call "the world"; the refuge of the other we call "the church." Were we surrendered without reserve to the crush of labour and the weariness of care; did the voice of our kind never speak but in the cries of the market and the greetings of the street; were our days unmarked by any purer chalk than the scores of business, and our towns unrelieved by loftier structures than the dwelling, the office, and the shop,—the truest, deepest, most authoritative part of our nature would be without expression, would become faint and latent in many, and would live but for sorrow in the few with whom it could not die. We stand here this day to forbid that sad issue. We create here a centre and shrine for our highest affections. This is to be a converging point for the scattered lights of love and hope and faith, that come athwart us in the path of our cares or the darkness of our griefs. Here is the focus of our worship,—without passage through whose atmosphere, without refraction through whose tears, no tint of glory, no painted bow of promise, would ever touch the leaden clouds of our experience. In whatever way men own the authority, and

find the aliment, of these devout convictions and aspirations, and associate for the expression of them, there is *a Church.*

And *that* is specifically a *Christian* church which accepts Jesus of Nazareth as (under the limitations of humanity) the *realization of this ideal,* the blending point of historical fact and divine perfection. For those who thus accept him, the eye of reverence becomes fixed in content. The craving imagination, roving over the universe for constituent atoms of moral truth and heavenly beauty, is restrained: veneration and love can stay at home, and sit at the feet of the domestic prophet of this dear world. Not that we need, as Christians, blind our hearts to any fresh admirations, read history or life with a critic's superciliousness, and shut up the Pantheon of our natural homage. On the contrary, he who has most discernment of supreme perfection, will have the quickest sense of all other good. But still there will be no passionate quest of objects to satiate the fever of the heart; no straining of the eye, as across a desert-world, to detect the cooling spring; no mistake of the mocking mirage for the pure lake. He that hath drunk of the living water shall never thirst again. This, and no servile self-surrender, is the true and only "rest in the church."

In a word, then, we unite for advancement of the *Christian Life.* The whole sphere of our thought we would bring into harmony with the image of Christ's mind: in our worship, looking up through it to God; in our efforts of will, lifting ever nearer to it both ourselves and the world. The scope of a church, like the sweep of conscience, is all-comprehensive:—to perfect the life personal, domestic, industrial, political, social,—I claim it *all* as the aim of the heavenly law which seeks expression here. And in the mere fact of *association* for this end, there is an acknowledgment by each member that *others can aid him* to perfect the highest relations of his life. He owns that they are not wholly at the disposal of his private self-will.

He renounces his freedom to do as he likes, and asks at once *liberty and help* to do as he ought; not liberty for himself against others, but help from others against himself. Here, then,—that truth may keep its health,—may there ever be free teaching and free learning! Here,—that duty may hold its gentleness,—may internal provision be made that the strong shall help the weak; and,—that it may not lose its courage,—may hearty protests be uttered against external wrongs, and a welcome to the birth of every good! Here,—that piety may resume its divine ascendency,—may only guileless worship be paid, and true interpreters be found of the sorrows and aspirations of good hearts.

In such an attempt to organize the Christian life, there is nothing *exclusive;* and in the cluster of neighbouring churches that look down upon us here, we discern only a fraternity of coadjutors whose work,—a part of the same husbandry of God,—lies in a field our tillage cannot reach. In such attempt, moreover, there is nothing *temporary and perishable.* It is insured by the laws of our nature and the providence of God. Amid the imposing growth of material wealth and pride, it is not unseasonable to remember that *temple-architecture* is the oldest in the world, and to ask, after so impressive a vindication of its longevity, whether, having been the earliest, it may not prove the latest term of human civilization. I am persuaded that so it will be. For there is in the soul of man "a temple not made with hands," which demands and shapes forth the visible structure as its shell of life; which is ever fresh amid the change and wreck of ages, and can build again from the ruins of the past; indeed, the hidden cloister of whose worship will remain still open, and thrill with higher strains, when time and its structures shall be no more.

THE WATCH-NIGHT LAMPS.

THE WATCH-NIGHT LAMPS.*

Now does the Heavenly Mercy rebuke all my fears. The long-imagined moment is really come: God restores us to each other. Beneath his eye we parted, and before his face we meet; and that Infinite Light scatters the lingering shadows of misgiving which have hung around the forecast of this hour. We have not hoped in vain that he would remove with us to the shrine we have devoutly raised; and now in his eternal memory he sets the vows and prayers by which this new opportunity is to be consecrated or condemned. In distant lands, through waiting months, my eye has rested upon this day; which has appeared as a star of hope behind the perspective of every scene, and looked down, with a clear and guiding sanctity, on intervening tracts that had sometimes no other, and *never* a diviner, ray. Standing here at length, and looking round on this strange mixture of the new and old,—the outward structure new and beautiful, the living temple of faithful hearts both old and dearer far,—First, I greet you with all the warmth of my affection and the fresh devotion of all my powers; consecrating myself anew to the service, not indeed of your will,—but of your faith and highest hope, your love and conscience, your remorse and aspiration,—which you know to be interpreters of a Will that must be monarch of your own. Next, I remember some whom we had thought to have with us as sharers of our joy, but whom the voice of our salutation can no longer reach. Those close-filled

* First Sunday of Public Worship in Hope Street Church, Liverpool, October 21, 1849.

ranks cannot hide from me the vacancies in their midst; and I miss *here* the sweet attentive look of maidenly docility,—*there* the dear and venerable form of one from whose eyes age had exhausted the vision but not the tears, and whose features were quickened and kindled by the light within. Greeting to others, Farewell to them; and to Him, with whom we and they alike live; from whose presence no pathless sea, no Alpine height, no gulph of death, can e'er divide; who spares us for his work, or calls us to his rest; who makes sweet the memory of dreadful hours, and turns our tremblings into joy;—to Him, the assuager of care, the reviver of hope, the giver of opportunity, I render for this hour a glad thanksgiving and renew my vow to bear again his glorious yoke.

My purpose this morning is very simple. I ask you only to think what you have done in raising this building, and to find for your own act its true ground of thought. That you have *built this house at all*, places you at once in the great commonwealth of Christendom, and detaches you from all faiths or *un*faiths that would destroy it. That you have *joined together* to build it, proclaims that through your religion there runs a *common consciousness* which blends and organizes your individual wills into a higher unity, and makes a *Church*. The forms you have given to its outline, and the memorials embodied in its stones, speak everywhere the sentiments of *Worship*, and promise here, not the severity of teaching, but the mellowed tones of meditation and prayer. That you throw open its gates on this sacred day, and ever, when a week is gone, think to come back to it again, is a confession that you *cannot* make your every day a Sabbath, and *would* not turn your Sabbath into an every day; but would still intersect the time with holy lines, and help to prolong that ladder of heaven which climbs as yet through all Christian duration, the favourite pathway of saintly souls. These cardinal points I silently assume as fixed upon the very face of your design; and what further may be the function

of a Church, and ought to be the function of *this* Church, in the present age of the world, I would explain from the words of the parable,

"The wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps."—MATT. xxv. 4.

And then, presuming on their supplies, they took their ease, like the foolish, and while the bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and slept. So must it *not* be in that great watch-night,—that solemn eve of an eternal day,—which we call *Human Life.* The spirit that sits sentinel through its hours, intent for the Master's voice and expectant of his approach, cannot, however rich her stores, set the lamp of duty idly on the ground, while she dreams away beneath the stars; and then hope, by a sudden start, at the last knock, to refit the neglected fires and join the pomp and mingle with the everlasting train. The watch-lights which we must burn before God are no outward thing, no ritual adornment, but, like the glow-worm's, the intensest kindling of our own life, rising and sinking with the tone of our energies; and the oil that feeds them is too ethereal to be set by; it exists only by being ever used and ever re-distilled. To keep the heart awake,—to resist all collapse of the will and the affections,—to bring the angels of our nature to a mood not merely less heedless than the foolish virgins, but more faithful than the wise; this is the disciple's great thought, ever ringing like a midnight bell upon his ear, from the Master's awful word, "*Watch!*" A Church is a fraternity for accomplishing this thought; an association for realizing the Christian life, creating the Christian mind, and guarding from deterioration the pure type of Christian perfection; and its agency is designed for keeping to their vigils the several Graces of the soul commissioned to wait upon their Lord; for trimming the lamps they severally bear, and screening them from the winds and damps of this world's night. Let us number these Graces as they stand. Till their lamps were lighted they were themselves invisible, dark negations on the grand

summit of human nature, looking into the dark: but since the glory of Christ has caught them, they shine afar, and we see in their forms the distinctive spirits of our religion. First, I discern the Spirit of

ENDEAVOUR.—Foremost among the elements of the Christian consciousness do I place this,—that we must strive and wrestle to achieve the Will of God, and that only he who faints can fail. What else means the deep doctrine of self-denial, which it has ever been the lowest impertinence of philosophy to doubt, and the last degradation of human nature to reject? How else can we read the contempt we feel for those who evade martyrdom with a lie,—the throbbing of our hearts as we watch the tempted in the crisis of his trial,—and their leap of exultation when he decides, "Better perish than be false"? These sentiments, than which none are more ineradicable in man, and none more intensely stamped into Christian history, would be absurd illusions, if we were not endowed with a knowledge, placed under a law, and invested with a power of right or wrong: they are founded on the conception of life as an *Obedience* due, and of mere Self-will as an insurrection against authority infinitely venerable. This faith, which assigns a *moral* basis to all religion, touches, I believe, the ultimate point of all certainty: older than this or newer, more authentic, more infallible, no revelation can ever be. Its very contrarieties, which offend the one-sidedness of logicians and enthusiasts, constitute its truth, and accurately represent man's balanced position; whom you can neither turn into the mere realm of nature nor invest with the dignity of a God; who is at once bound, yet free to slip his bonds, and strangely finds in his thraldom a true liberty, in escape a wretched slavery; and is conscious of divine and infinite prerogatives immersed and struggling in finite conditions. All religion is Christian in proportion as it takes up into its very substance this law of conscience, and resolves itself into a consecration of Duty. It is the great glory of the Catholic religion, that it

adopts and proclaims this principle: to this one deep root, which penetrates through the soil and very structure of our human world, far beyond the reach of ecclesiastical storms, does it owe the width of its branches and the richness of its shade. Conscience, indeed, in reference to the universe of *Persons*, like Reason in relation to the universe of *Things*, is the *Catholic faculty* of human nature; and no faith which does not interpret and sanctify it can take as its motto, "*Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus.*" I am not forgetful of St. Paul's depreciation of *legal* religion, and of the triumphs, asserted in all the churches of the reformation, of a Gospel of Love over a System of Law. This also I embrace with all my soul, and chime in with the hymn of Grace led by Luther's mighty voice. But this truth is only the other's second half, and without it could no more exist than the complement without the primal arc, or the joy of convalescence without the lassitude of illness. Did not Conscience *propose* the awful problem, and the Will struggle into its midst, Faith and Affection could never bring the relief of solution. Law and love are but the strophe and antistrophe of the great chorus of redemption; and without both the opening and the answering voices, the thought and melody must alike be broken. The moral law of God then, and the moral freedom of man, constituting life a theatre of endeavour, we lay as the granite pillars of an everlasting faith,—the Rock on which we build our Church; and whoever, in the partial spirit of one age, builds on any more inflammable material,—on the wood, hay, stubble, of a disenthralled enthusiasm,—shall find, when his work is tried by fire, that, however poised for awhile on the upward pressure of elastic heats, it will lean and totter as the temperature declines, and either drop on to some more primitive foundation, or collapse among the ruins of the past.

Is Christianity, then, a mere Ethical System? and do we identify religion and morality? Shall we say that the man who commits no fraud, or violence, or excess, is

forthwith a denizen of the Kingdom of Heaven? God forbid! as soon might we say that every scribbler who makes no slip in scanning his metres and tuning his rhymes is a great Poet. Morality speaks like the defiance of the hero to his foe,—"Depart"; Religion like the summons of the leader to his impatient host,—"Arise, come on!" As a prison-task to an Olympic race, so is the duty copied from a code to the service inspired by a faith. So long as moral restraints and obligations are urged upon us we hardly know how, by usage, by opinion, by taste, by good sense and regard to consequences, they appear to lie within a very moderate and definable compass, and to be matters of dry necessity included in the conditions of respectability. But when the voice of Christ has opened our spirit to their true nature, and from utterances of human police they become tones, stealing through the foliage of the soul, from enshadowed oracles of God, their whole character and proportion are as much changed as if the dull guest had turned into an angel, and the stifling tent expanded to the midnight skies. From the drowsy figure emerges the sleepless immortal; upon the heavy body grow the glorious wings; and the sheet which seemed a tiresome limit to our head, passes into the deep of stars open for an everlasting flight. The feeling of duty, no longer negative, ceases to act like an external hindrance and prohibition, and becomes a positive eternal power of endless aspiration. Yes, of *endless* aspiration; for if the suggestions of conscience are breathings from the Holiest, they are no finite whole, but parts of an infinite Thought, the surface movements of a boundless deep. When we have brought ourselves to be at one with them, when they are no longer dashed and broken by the resistance of our spirits, but carry harmoniously with them all the movements of our nature, still all is not over; God will now try us with a quicker time: wave after wave of impulse will roll in with intenser speed from the tides of his eternal Will; till the undulations reach the limits of a new element,

and our thrilling spirits burst into an immortal light. To whomsoever God is holy, to him is Duty Infinite. The good habits, in which others abide content, give him no rest; they are but half his world, and *that* not the illumined half: by the rotatory law of all custom, they have gone off into the dark, and make now but the negative hemisphere of his obligations; and this must be completed by another, where the morning light of thought is fresh, and the genial warmth of love yet glows. To such a mind is revealed the depth of that word, "There is none good save One"; and of that other, "I must work the work of Him that sent me, while it is day"; and life appears simply as the appointed scene of *holy Endeavour*.

Now, to awaken this consciousness of infinite obligation, to draw forth and interpret its solemn intimations; to resist and expose, as a Satanic delusion, every sluggish doubt or mean doctrine which denies it,—and to sustain it in its noblest resolves,—is the first function of a Christian Church. The great antagonist to it is that corruption of ease, that poisonous notion of enjoyment as the end of life, which in so many men absolutely stifles the higher soul, and suppresses in them the belief in its existence. In that lowest condition of human nature, man enjoys a certain unity with himself, because all powers above his animal and intellectual being are fast asleep, and give him no contradiction in his unworthy career. In its highest condition, his nature reaches again a unity with itself, because faith and conscience have carried their demands, and rule without dispute whatever is below. It is the aim of the Church to urge him through the vast interval between these two limits; during the whole of which he is at *variance with himself*, and cries out for deliverance from that "body of death," which at first made up his entire consciousness and is no other than his unawakened self. When that fatal sleep is once broken, it is the business of a Church to suggest, perhaps even to provide, a discipline of voluntary self-denial, without which the incipient insight

will not last, but relapse into the darkness which it is so difficult to dispel from the infinite. It is wonderful how faithful endeavour withdraws the curtain from before the opening eye of the late slumbering soul. As one who just turns on his pillow,—with another folding of the hands to sleep,—*feels without recognizing* the dazzling light, and it only passes through into his dreams to paint anew their empty phantasies;—so the mind, just stirring from the dead repose of self, does not yet treat as *real* the dawning glow of a diviner consciousness; which, stopping there, will only glide as a bewildering spectrum over the scenery which the man takes to be the world. But let him spring up and break the bands of sleep; let him move about among the objects which the new light shows, and *do* the things which it requires; and anon he finds what's true, and feels how he is transferred from the subterranean den of dreams into the open and lustrous universe. *Effort* is the condition of the commonest intellectual knowledge; much more, of insight into things moral and divine. Is there a poem or a landscape which you are anxious to remember? So long as you only *look at it and take it in*, though with attention ever so fixed, its hold upon you will be slight and transient: but invert the mental order, begin at the active instead of the passive end, and force yourself *to reproduce it* by pencil or by word; and it becomes a part of yourself, incorporated with the very fabric of your mind. So with the whispers of the holiest spirit; while they only pass across the still,—though it be *listening*,— ear of the soul, they are evanescent as the traceless wind; but *act* on them, and you will believe in them; produce their issue, and you shall know their source; and he with whom God's presence has quieted a passion or subdued a grief is surprised by the nearness of His reality. Such *Endeavour*, such earnestness of life, do the members of a Church undertake to preserve in one another's remembrance.

But next to this high Angel of the Soul, I observe

a downcast spirit, bearing in her hand the lamp of HUMILIATION: and she too must never cease from her sorrowing watch.

Endeavour has its seat in the Will. If there were no sense of *difficulty* in the exercise of Will, if all resistance crumbled away at the first touch of purpose, and thought could fly off into instant execution, failure, shame, remorse would be unknown; conscience would realize whatever it conceived; and though the *infinite character* of holy obligation would leave an ineffaceable interval between our position and our aspirations, the one would for ever tend to overtake the other; and the chase, albeit without a goal, would be inspired by the joy of an eternal success. No deeper shade than the mild sense of imperfection would fall upon the spirit. But our actual condition is very different. The suggestions of God are ever fresh and his enterprises always new, demanding, if not new matter, at least a new spirit: and it is *hard* to our Will to quit the old track, to snap the old restraints, to lash itself into a higher speed. And thus, with a sentient nature that loves the *easiest*, and a conscience that reveres the *best*, we feel that Epicurus and Christ meet face to face within our soul; which becomes at once the theatre, the stake, the arbiter, of the most solemn of our conflicts. The pleasant pleadings, so persuasive to our languid strength, make our Temptation; and their triumph plunges us into the *Sense of Guilt*. This utterly changes the relations of the mind to God; breaks the springs of Endeavour; turns every blessed sanctity from a life *within* the heart to a load upon it; and condenses the infinite heaven of duty into a leaden universe of nightmare on the breast. So sinks in sadness the pure enthusiasm that had flung itself upon the godlike track; and the wing that had soared so high hangs drooping and broken down. It is less the *anguish* of this fallen state, than its *weakness*, that makes it awful. Who shall remove this burden of sin, which paralyses the soul's native strength and restrains it in terror from seeking

God's? Could the immediate remorse be banished or outlived, yet who can resume an infinite race with a lowered hope, or faith abashed? This crisis is the turning point of many a life. By either fall or rise may the mind escape from it; in the one case relapsing by the gravitation of the world into the stupor of indifference and the old belief in the dreams of sense: in the other, lifted once more into a light of heaven, milder perhaps, but less precarious. *Lifted*,—I say; for sure it is that the fallen, though he may hold his place and fall no more, has crippled his power to lift himself. Even an archangel's wing cannot rise without an atmosphere; and the human will (in things divine) is ineffectual with its mightiest strokes, unless surrounded by a certain air of pure and clear affection,—which recent sin exhausts and spoils. While the sweet element of love and hope and self-reverence is lost to the mind, the spasms of resolution are but pitiable distortions,—cramps of uneasiness and fear, not the progressive action of a vigorous health. It is the awful punishment of all unfaithfulness, that it turns the mind in upon itself; makes it look at its disease, and put forth a writhing movement to escape it, with no effect but to renew the anguish, to feel all the weakness, and sink down again in faintness and despair. The intense power which conscious evil gives to considerations of *Interest*, the tumult of anxiety and alarm it induces, is in itself the most fatal obstacle to recovery: on which, however, with the delusion common to all empirics, the mere moralist rests all his hopes. There are no terms in God's universe on which the selfish can be saved; no,—not if a thousand Calvaries were to repeat to him the divine tragedy of the world. And the more you set upon him with lists of unanswerable reasons, the more do you make him the sharp-witted alien from God. What opening then is there for the offender prostrate under the sense of sin? Shall I be told that expiation must be made by *another*, who will bear the burden for him? Doubtless, with the

low mood to which guilt has brought him, he is just in the state to accept that mercantile view of sin, and reckon it as a debt against him on the ledger of the universe, which the overflowing wealth of some perfect nature might gratuitously wipe off. And if you can then convince him that such free sacrifice *has* actually been made, that for *him* in his degradation a heavenly nature has been moved with pity, taken up the conditions of sorrow, laid down the immortal prerogative and died; I do not deny that you may touch the springs of wonder and delight, and that a burst of thankfulness may break his ice-bound spirit and set it free. Gratitude for an immense personal benefit is an affection of which a previously selfish mind may be susceptible; its very selfishness rendering an act of generosity in another the more surprising. The passionate emotion thus awakened may certainly tear him from his prison; and as the object to which your fiction conducts him is the Jesus Christ of sacred history, that sublime and holy being, the gentle and winning type of God's own perfectness, it will be strange if the false and immoral grounds of his first homage are not insensibly exchanged for a veneration purer and more disinterested. As it is sometimes easiest at the moment to cure a morbid patient by a trick, the immediate case of many souls may be met by this disenchanting legerdemain; but not without the cost inseparable from *untruth*. The great doctrine of *mediation* is here corrupted by a complete inversion of its truth. There are two parts of our nature essential to our first approaches to God; the *Imagination* places him before us as an object of conception external to the mind; the *Conscience* interprets his personal relations of communion with ourselves. The first of these emphatically needs a mediator; the function of the second perishes, the moment he appears. We *cannot trust* the representative faculty of our nature whose pencil of design varies with the scope of Reason, and whose colours change with the moods and lights of Passion, to go direct to the sheet of heaven, and

show us the Almighty there: else, what watery ghost, or what glaring image, might we not have of the Eternal Providence? Only through what *has been* upon earth can we safely look to *what is* in heaven, through historical to divine perfection; and by keeping the eye intently fixed on the highest and most majestic forms in which living minds have ever actually revealed their thoughts and ways, we have a steady type, with hues that do not change or fly, of the great source of souls. Jesus of Nazareth, the centre of the scattered moral possibilities of history, is thus mediator to our imagination between God and man. On the other hand, *we cannot allow* the Conscience to resign for an instant its native right of immediate contact and audience with God: to delegate the privilege is treason; and to quit his eye is death. Yet the current theology reverses this. The imagination of the offender, at the very instant that it is throwing out the fire and smoke of conscious guilt, is invited to paint its own unmediated image of the Most High, and rely upon the terrible picture with unquestioning faith; and while the corrupted fancy is thus sustained in its audacity, the shuddering Conscience is encouraged in its cowardice, and allowed to hand over its burthen to a mediator, under pretence of forfeited approach. Who says, that the sinner must fly the terror of the Lord? I say, he must *face* the terror of the Lord, and instead of blasting it will only melt him then. You say, he *dares* not tell his tale and cannot pray? Then, I answer, not yet is he true and contrite; and it is not his humility, but the little speck of insincerity still spoiling it, that asks for a mediator. He must accept his whole abasement; must desire, not to *escape*, but to *endure* his woe; must not even hang the head and veil the face before God; but look full up into the eye of infinite Purity, and, as he disburthens himself, seek its most piercing glance, that nothing may escape. Nothing but truth can appear before God; but truth always *can* appear, and loses its very nature in parting with its rights to an

intercessor. And, as dreaded duties are apt in the performance to surprise us by their lightness, so the moment the soul lies thus exposed and transparent before God, he appears terrible no more: the dark reserve thrown from the heart seems to sweep away the cloud from him; and he shines upon us, not indeed with the sudden blaze of clearness after storm, but with the affectionateness of an eternal constancy. We have trusted him, and he is distant no more; we are emancipated into sympathy with his pure nature; the old aspirations find way again; and instead of looking at him with outside recoil, we go up into his glory, losing ourselves once more in those positive admirations and desires for perfection, which are the very glow of his spirit, and which, far more than any passionate gratitude for personal benefits, are fitted to restore our union with him. And in this crisis it is that the repentant eye, now purified by tears, turns with infinite refreshment from the false forms that have beguiled it, to rest on Christ, as the divine repository of the sanctity we have lost and seek again; and that the ear feels the deep sweetness of that call, "Come unto me, ye weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

Now to give this humiliating self-knowledge, to open the sources of remorse, to prevent its lingering into morbid and credulous woe, to cause every film of pride and fear to drop away, and bring the penitent to make a clear heart before God, is the proper aim and function of a Church; which thus humanizes, while it sanctifies, and uses our own sins as ground for pity to others, not others' as excuses for our own. In the early Christian societies, penitents were recognized and distinguished as a class,—a practice which, however needed in evil times as a check to apostacy, could have no place now, without drawing lines of classification not truly distinguishing the characters of men. In later times, the still more dangerous practice of confession to a human,—yet hardly human, because a sacerdotal,—ear, bears witness to the boundless power of repentance in the

heart of Christendom. Perhaps the reaction into the jealous individuality of modern times, in which each soul not only repels the intrusion, but declines the sympathy of another, has been carried beyond the point of natural equilibrium. At least it is *not natural* that, in fraternities under common vows of Christian obligation, flourishing selfishness should often hold a higher place than humble sanctity; and *unrepaired*, therefore *impenitent*, injustice should lift its head unabashed amid indulgent worshippers. Surely the power of rebuke is too much lost in an easy indifference; the estimates of the world,—ranging greatly by outward fortune and condition,—have extravagantly encroached on those of the Church, which can look only to internal soundness and affluence of soul. *That* is not a true community of disciples, in which a collective Christian opinion does not make itself felt by at least some silent and significant expression. So long as the trumpet gives an uncertain sound, who will prepare himself for the battle? By its revelations of self-knowledge, its echo to the voice of self-reproach; by its suggestion of a restorative discipline; by its appeal to that faith in infinite possibilities which alone sustains the burthen of penitential self-denial; by leading the soul at once to suffer, to aspire, and to love much,—must every Church of Christ pour into the energy of *endeavour*, the lowly spirit of *humiliation*.

Side by side with this sad Angel of the Soul stands another, with look of equal meekness, only clear of shame: and the small fair light in her hand, shining a few steps into the dark around, is the lamp of

TRUST.—The companion Spirits of which we have hitherto spoken preside over the work and temper of the *Conscience* in its relation to God; and they would still have to stand upon their watch, though the soul (were such a thing possible) lived in empty space, in mere private audience with its Creator. But now comes before it *another* object, forcing it to look a different way, and pressing for some orderly interpretation;—viz., *Nature* or the outward

Universe. To a mind that, through moral experience, has *already begun its life with God*, the glorious spectacle of the heavens and the earth will instantly appear divine: the voice of the waters and the winds, the procession of the sun and stars, the mountain's everlasting slopes, smiling upwards with pastures till they frown in storms,—will seem the expressions of Eternal Thought. Well would it be if this first absorption of nature into the substance of faith enabled them permanently to grow harmoniously together. But the universe, which ought to be the abode, becomes to us the rival, of the living and indwelling God. Its inflexible steadiness, its relentless march, so often crushing beneath the wheels of a blind law the fairest flowers of beauty and the unripened fruits of patient hope, look so unlike the free movements of a living and loving mind, that the decrees impressed on finite matter begin to contest the sway of the Infinite Spirit. Other sorrows than any mentioned yet,—sorrows *not merited* or self-incurred,—and which even fancy cannot plausibly link with any sin, come upon us; and as we cannot sincerely meet them with *humiliation*, we need some other guide from infidel despair. The order of Cause and Effect crosses and conflicts with the order of Moral Law. This is plainly seen in the history of the physical sciences; whose exclusive pursuit first lowers the conception of God to that of the primal force, or at best the scientific director of creation; and then lapses, consistently enough, into a fatalistic atheism. And the same thing is keenly felt in that inexplicable distribution of suffering in human life, which, in every age, has perplexed the faith and saddened the love, of hearts not alien to God. How must this controversy be ended in our souls, between the *physical* God omnipotent in nature, and the *holy* God who reveals himself in Conscience? I will not say here what may be the solution which the thoughtful may draw from a devout Philosophy; only that it must be one which charges no evil upon God. Whatever cannot be glorified into good, let it be referred, so far as it is not from the

human will, to that negative datum, that shapeless assemblage of conditions, which constitute the *ground* of the Creator's work; but it must be withheld *on any terms* from him who is the perfectly and only Good. He must be ever worshipped, not as the source, but as the antagonist, of ill; the august and ever-living check to its desolating power, who never rides upon the whirlwind, but that he may curb the storm. It is only in this view that He can have pity on our sorrows; for who could *pity* the sufferings which he himself, without the least necessity, invents and executes? That cry on Calvary, "My God, my God, why hast thou *forsaken* me?"—was it not a cry for *rescue*,—rescue as from a *foreign* foe, from a power *un*divine? And did it not then burst from One who felt the anguish of that hour as the inrush of a tide from which the barrier of God's volition had withdrawn? And so the faith which *gave way* in that momentary cry is just the opposite of this; a faith that no evil is let loose without his will; that he knows the utmost it can do, keeps it ever in his eye, and will yield to it no portion of his holy and affectionate designs; that he has *considered all our case*, and will not fail to bring it out clear, if we are true to him. *Trust* has no other bearable meaning than this; for else it would only say that God, being the unquestionable cause of evil, is not malicious in producing it, and would thus merely silence a doubt impossible in a Christian, and scarcely pardonable in the grossest heathenism. *Trust* therefore in the ascendency of divine Thought and Affection in the universe, serene confidence in their perfect victory, I take to be the essence of the Christian faith respecting nature. The *particular* thought of God that may be hid amid events, moulding their forms and preparing their tissues for some growth of incomparable beauty, it may be impossible to trace: but He is there and never leaves his everlasting work; which is the same in the shrine of conscience, in the mind of Christ, and through the sphere of universal nature.

Now to interpret life and all visible things in the spirit

of this Trust; to raise the mind oppressed by the sense of material necessity: to meet the tendencies towards passiveness and despair, and, for the consolation of memory and the kindling of hope, show where the order, not of a hard mechanism, but of beauty, love and goodness is everywhere enthroned;—this also is the duty of a Church. In this relation we must contradict the doctrine of mere science, which proclaims *Force*, rather than *Thought*, as the source of all: we must counteract its purely causal and fatalistic explanations; must detain in the living present that God whom it would allow to recede indefinitely into the Past, and must lean upon Him as the nearest to us in our weakness, the most loving in our sadness, and the Rock beneath our feet in our alarms. We agree together to sustain each other in this sacred trust; to withstand the godless doubts and grievings suggested by our lower mind; to defy nature's inexorable Laws to disguise for us the supernatural light and love within; and to feel the hardest matter of life, as well as the severest work of conscience, burning at heart with his dear spirit.

This triple group, however, of Endeavour, Humiliation, and Trust, are never found apart from a sister Spirit, in whose features you trace more human lineaments, and in whose hand is borne the lamp of

SERVICE.—An individual mind, alone in the universe with God, might hold the latent germs of all that is human, and yet, in that solitude, could hardly enter, perhaps, on the real experience of endeavour, humiliation, or trust. It is only amid *other* minds, in the reflection of eye upon eye and soul upon soul, that we so read our impulses, and decipher our inspirations, as to be really capable of the religious life. Society, which opens the sphere of mutual sympathy, touches also the springs of reverence and worship. And I entreat you to notice *how* it is that the companionship of our fellows operates to bring out these individual affections. We hear much in this connection about the *natural equality* of souls, implied in their common source

and common work and common end, and are referred to this evident brotherhood as the true basis of both fraternal love to one another and filial acknowledgment of God. And, no doubt, this identity of spiritual nature *is* indispensable to all sympathy and all devotion;—not, however, as their positive and exciting cause, but only as their *negative condition.* Like only can comprehend like: and if the being next me had *not* the same nature and the same experiences with myself, I should have no key by which to read him: he would belong to an unintelligible type; and fellow-feeling could have no place. But the likeness here required is not in the minds as they *are*, only as they *might be.* Their circles of *possibility* must coalesce; the same capacities must sleep within them, and the same Law must rule over them. This similitude of *kind*, the silent assumption of which lies in all our affections, merely expresses an ultimate and unrealized *tendency*, to which present and actual facts will continually approximate. Meanwhile, these facts present a very different picture;—not of *resemblance* between man and man, but of variety so vast and contrast so startling, as almost to perplex our faith in the unity of nature. Now it is precisely this *inequality of souls* which is the *positive awakener* of all our higher affections. No man could love or venerate in a universe stocked with mere repetitions of himself; the endless portrait would be a barren weariness. He pities what is below him in happiness: he reveres what is above him in excellence: he loves what is different from him in beauty. His affections rest on those whom he blesses and those who bless him,—on his clients and his God. At the shock of lower lives and the startling spectacle of higher, he is driven to moral recoil and drawn to moral aspiration; in the one case invested with armour for the resistance of evil, in the other equipped with wings to soar after the good. Whatever is purer and nobler in another than in ourselves opens to us a new possibility, and wields over us a new authority; and thus it is that, ascending

through the gradations of souls which culminate in Christ, we find ourselves carried thence at a bound over the chasm between finite and infinite, and present at the feet of the Most High, saying, "Just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of Saints; who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name, for Thou only art holy!"

It is therefore precisely through the diversity of minds that the unity of the Divine law reveals and asserts itself within us; and the common end of life to all is felt. And it is on this same inequality of souls that Christianity, as a religion of love and mutual aid, builds all its work. On the one hand, the strong must bend to the weak; and on the other, the weak look up to the strong. In both cases there is self-denial,—self-renunciation from pity, in the former,—from obedience, in the other. In both there is reverence for what is divine; with the one, for a godlike capacity in the low; with the other, for a godlike reality in the lofty. When the differing ranks of minds read off their relations in these opposite directions, the whole compass of Christian service is given. Within the Church therefore the eye must be trained to discern this rank, the affections to own it, the will to obey it. Disguised under a like exterior of life are souls divided by immeasurable intervals; and it is strange and even terrible to think what secret differences lurk beneath the common gloss and gaiety of the same assembled numbers. How superficial is the kindred of the utterly earthly, who sees no *reality* but in the means of ease, the course of material interests, and the colours thrown up by the shifting game of eternal life; with the saintly sufferer, before whom these flit as unsubstantial shadows, and nothing is real but the spirit-drama that is enacting in the midst and the great Will that plays the everlasting part. Yet we often move about where both of them are found, and speak with them face to face, and believe them much alike. Can we not catch from our examplar, who looked with divine perception straight into the heart of the widow and the Samaritan, some portion of

that insight which detects the heroes and despises the impostors of the present? Why should we leave it to history to find out and glorify the good? If they are with us, they are the most precious of all God's gifts; let us know them ere they die, and feel that the earth is sacred where they tread. Above all, in every Church, the only classification known should be of character and age: and in using these as grounds of mutual service, provision should be made for teaching the child, for lifting the suffering, for confirming the weak, and for supplying duties proportioned to the strength of the strong.

And while this angel of Service stands to her watch, a glorious spirit is at her side and closes the train; with an undying flame from her lamp of

COMMUNION. — The relations of service are far from being limited to the present and its intercourses. Our life is but the focus of living light into which the Past and the Future condense their interests. The ranks of minds by which we help each other, run up both the directions of time, and cover the two worlds of mortals and immortals. We are ourselves disciples of an ancient and a foreign prophet; and as we pronounce the word "Christian," we feel the spark of his transmitted inspiration uniting us with a long chain of generations, and fusing Christendom into one life and one Church. We are disciples also of an *ascended* prophet: nor is it possible for any one to bow in soul before the divine law of which he has made us conscious, to burn with the aspirations which it kindles, and touch upon the peace of entire surrender, without feeling assured that he is created on the *scale of immortality*, and that the risen Christ is indeed, as the Scripture saith, the head of an immortal host. It is a faith which fails chiefly to those, who, in looking at human life, miss its grandest elements, and are little familiar with the highest and characteristic features of our nature. Ask the confidants of great souls,—the bosom-friends of the holy,—and they will tell you that life eternal is the only lot at all natural to

the children of the Highest. And the more you grow faithful to your own most solemn experience, and learn to trust your noblest love, the more will that amazing prospect assume proportion to the terms of your daily thought. The happy instinct of purified affections is ever one of hope and ready faith. And when I simply remember what faculties, what conception, what insight, are implied in a being to whom a *Church* is possible at all; when I think what a scene in the universe must be opened to a mind ere it can *pray;* when I reflect how the Infinite God must estimate one whom He thinks it worth while to put on trial amid the theatre of free souls;—all sense of difficulty recedes from the Christian doctrine of an hereafter; all rules drawn from other races of creatures sink absolutely away; and man appears no less ennobled above them than if, like the Angel of the "Revelation," he was standing in the sun. Under the influence of this truth the natural kindred of souls is infinitely extended and deepened; exalted into independence of change; and glorified by the hope of sympathy and connexions ever fresh. The family of God colonizes, not only the banks of the time-stream that passes by, but the Alpine heights from which it flows, and the blessed isles of the ocean to which it tends.

This sense of Communion between all ages and both worlds, it is the business of a Church to cherish. Within its walls, and by its ways, must the mind be surrounded by the atmosphere in which this faith may thrive and grow,—this family tradition of noble souls be guarded and handed down. For this end, neither the mediation of argument nor the directness of authority will avail so much as the just and holy discipline of the conscience and affections. To nurture the love of greatness and goodness in the past; to awaken confidence in the intuitive estimates of the pure and pious heart; to glorify the dark places of the world with some light of thought and love; to vindicate the sanctity of death against the pretensions of its physical features, and penetrate its awful spaces with the glow of

prayer and hope;—is the true method of clearing away the mists from holy expectation, and realizing the communion of Saints.

See then in complete array, the five *wise* Spirits of the soul that must stand through the night of the Bridegroom's tarrying, with their ever-constant lights of Endeavour, Humiliation, Trust, Service, and Communion. To maintain them at their vigils is the proper end of every Church that would maintain the Christian attitude of life. Am I asked, by some theologic wanderer, what then is special to *this* Church? I say, chiefly this, that these five lamps, and these alone, we believe to be held in angel hands, and fed with the eternal aliment of truth; nor will they ever give of their oil to nurture the emptied lamps, which many foolish servitors of the bridegroom have brought, and which now are flickering with their last flame, and expiring in the smoke of error. A pretty late hour in the watches of this world has struck: many of the interests and controversies that once dazzled with their flame have been self-consumed; and when, to find how the night rolls, we look up to heaven and observe the altered place and half-inverted form of the eternal constellations, we know that a morning hour is drawing on. It behoves every Christian Church to be awake and set itself in order for a coming age, in which, as I believe, the strife will be something very different from that whence existing churches obtain their several names. It is not without some view to that Future of the Church that I have called the five spirits, *spirits of the soul*, and have shown them to you as they rise from our nature itself. I might with equal truth have called them *characteristics of Christianity*, and have evoked them by appeal to Scripture, and the analysis of Christian history. But we are on the verge of a time, when the mere use of an external authority, however just and moderate its application, will cease to be of much hearty avail; and only *those* elements either of Scripture or of Christian history will have any chance of reverent preservation, which find interpreta-

tion and response in the deeper experience of Man. Whoever keeps fearlessly true to these may feel secure; but none can say what else will survive the perils of the present and the coming time. What mean the strange movements of Catholicism on the one side, and a pantheistic Socialism on the other, between which every form of mere Protestantism is growing weaker, day by day? Are they not a reaction against the extreme individuality, the disintegrating tendency of modern Christianity; whose unions, born in the transient enthusiasm of reformation, cannot maintain themselves against the habits of freedom they have created, or live upon the dogmas they refuse to change? Are they not both an attempt, only prosecuted in opposite directions, to recover some centre of human cohesion, more powerful than interest or judgment, around which the scattered sympathies and dissipated energies of society may be collected? In this common quest, the one reproduces an authority dear to the Memory of Christendom, the other pours out prophecies dazzling to the Hopes of all men; the one adorns the *old* earth, the other paints a *new*. The field seems clearing fast to make room for these great rivals; and in their mutual position the signs are not few, that they portend a mightier contest than Europe has seen for many an age. The hosts are already visibly mustering. On the one hand the venerable Genius of a *Divine Past* goes round with cowl and crozier; and from the Halls of Oxford and the Cathedrals of Europe gathers, by the aspect of ancient sanctity and the music of a sweet eloquence and the praises of consecrated Art, a vast multitude of devoted crusaders to fight with him for the ashes of the Fathers and the sepulchres of the first centuries. On the other, the young Genius of a *Godless Future*, with the serene intensity of metaphysic enthusiasm on his brow, and the burning songs of liberty upon his lips, wanders through the great cities of our world, and in toiling workshops and restless colleges preaches the promise of a golden age, when priests and kings shall be hurled from their oppressive seat, and

reed humanity, relieved from the incubus of worship, shall start itself to the proportions of a God. Who shall abide in peace the crash and conflict of this war? He only, I believe, whose allegiance is neither to the antiquated Past, nor to the speculative Future; but to the imperishable, the ever-present Soul of man as it is; who keeps close, amid every change, to the reality of human nature which changes not; and who, following chiefly the revelations of the Divine Will to the open and conscious mind, and reading Scripture, history, and life, by their interpreting light, feels the serenity and rests on the stability of God.

THE GOD OF REVELATION HIS OWN INTERPRETER.

PREFACE.

IN the *British Quarterly Review* for August 1851, appears a critique on Mr. Greg's "Creed of Christendom." In the course of his remarks the reviewer introduces the following sketch of a modern Unitarian sermon :—

"We wish our readers to imagine for a moment that they see a man robed as a minister of religion, in the pulpit of an elegant ecclesiastical structure. The preacher begins by assuring a limited but well-dressed and fashionable auditory that it is one of the great mistakes of the modern church to suppose that, by placing ourselves in the age of the apostles, we place ourselves in connection with Christianity in its purity. It is not so. On the contrary, it is hard to conceive of men more filled with prejudices, and with prejudices more hostile to the religion of Jesus, than were the men who are known to us as his earliest disciples. Such, in fact, was the ceaseless blundering of those parties, both as to the letter and spirit of the system of which they professed themselves the special teachers, that we should no more think of looking to them, though bearing the name of Apostles, for a true presentation of the religion of Jesus, than to the towerings of a Hildebrand, or the visions of a Swedenborg. The preacher assures you, accordingly, that, in his judgment, Christianity has been preserved in the world, not so much by means of apostolic wisdom, as in defiance of apostolic weakness,—in spite of the attempts of these misguided men to give to it everywhere a Jewish cast and spirit,—in spite of their favourite notion about the end of the world as to come in the time of that generation, and of their narrowness, intolerance, selfishness, asceticism and much beside. Instead of learning implicitly from them, it behoves us to subject all their teaching to a suspicious and rigid scrutiny. In place of our being judged by their word, their

word is to be judged by us. In place of sitting passively at their feet, our first duty is to separate between the fragments of truth they have transmitted to us, and the accumulations of error and absurdity of their own which they have mixed up with it. In such a task we are much more competent than they. The mists of Jewish misconception which rested so thickly about them have no place with us. We can see as they could not see. Even towards Jesus, our position differs widely from theirs. They boasted of being his servants, *i.e.* in the language of that time, his slaves. As a consequence, it was a part of their weakness to call him Lord,—a term which denotes the holder of the slave. We take no such ground. We have chosen Jesus; he does not choose us. He is the leader, it is our will to follow, and we follow him willingly." . . . .

When this passage was pointed out to me, two circumstances enabled me to identify the sermon described in it with one which I had preached on the 15th of June last. 1st. The conjunction of the names of Hildebrand and Swedenborg gave a specific mark which could scarcely be misconstrued. 2nd. It had been stated to me that Dr. Vaughan, the editor of the *British Quarterly*, was among my hearers on the 15th of June. He may therefore be presumed to be my reporter on the 1st of August. He assures his readers that his sketch is "no picture of the imagination." Whether it conforms to the conditions of scrupulous and faithful representation may be decided by any one whom curiosity or a sense of justice may impel to consult the following pages. The sermon is here presented precisely as it was preached, without even the correction of those verbal *incuriæ* which, however venial in speech, ought not, as a general rule, to be transferred to type. My readers are thus placed in the very same position which Dr. Vaughan occupied as a hearer; only I would hope that, with less of the excitement of injured prepossessions, they may better apprehend the scope and spirit of the discourse.

It will be admitted that an author has a fair right to choose his own mode and time for presenting to the world what he desires to say. It is hard to have this right snatched out of one's hands by the angry impatience of polemical rumour. I must remind the reader that this is a compulsory publication; issued simply by way of testimony, to rectify a mis-statement of fact, not as an argument or exposition, adequate to the

maintenance of opinion. Addressed to those who hear me week by week, it formed but an element in the teaching of several years, and would be interpreted by many antecedent thoughts not present to the mind of a casual visitor. The qualifications and additions which would be proper in order to secure truth of impression to an external and unprepared audience, I am now precluded from introducing. It is perhaps too much to expect from theological eagerness that it should make allowance for this disadvantage. Be this as it may, I have no desire to shrink from my responsibilities as an expounder of divine truth : but, hiding nothing and pretending nothing, shall simply endeavour, through good or ill report, to have the answer of a clear conscience towards God.

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"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."—2 CORINTHIANS iv. 7.

THE old adage that "Man proposes, but God disposes," receives its proper illustration, not from individual life, but from the long courses of history. If men do but limit their aims to that which is proportioned to their power and opportunity, their "proposals" will receive little contradiction from God's "disposal"; and the expectation of success, however qualified by the quiet sense of dependence, is little less than a faith in the divine constancy. We can perhaps conceive of a world, where every one should form his plans so wisely and so modestly, as to encounter no disappointment, and where the all-ruling hand should endorse all his drafts upon the morrow. But even in such a world, it would soon become apparent that the human will, though always acting and never failing, was not the only Power. If not against it, yet without it and beyond it, ends would be accomplished which it never contemplated; which take it altogether by surprise; which eclipse all its personal intentions; and before which it stands and says, 'This is no thought of mine.' The first party of painted savages that raised a few huts upon the Thames, did not dream of the London they were creating, or know that in

* Hope Street Church, Liverpool, Sunday, June 15, 1851.

lighting the fire on their hearth they were kindling one of the great foci of Time. When the Athenians refused earth and water to the Persian king, they were intent only on repelling the insolence of foreign ambition; and did not foresee that they were opening for the genius of their nation a channel of perpetual influence that should ever widen as the ages advance. The Puritans who could not tolerate a surplice, or bend their necks to bow at the bidding of a rubric or a priest, spent their zeal upon the merits of a gesture or a form; and were little aware that they were educating a national character and creating a practical liberty which should be the pride and hope of two worlds. All the grand agencies which the progress of mankind evolves are formed in the same unconscious way. They are the aggregate results of countless single wills, each of which, thinking merely of its own end and perhaps fully gaining it, is at the same time enlisted by Providence in the secret service of the world. Thus it is, that out of separate acts, directed, it may be, on something quite distinct, Polities, Literatures, Religions, arise; the very influences which acquire in the end an ascendency over all individual life, and become the school of nations. Nothing is more startling than to see, as we compare the biography of persons with these great powers of history, how the latter absorb and appropriate the former; how private purpose often drops into insignificance and vanishes in higher ends that use it up; how gigantic schemes of action, making perhaps the turmoil and the torture of an age, die away like thunder on the summer air; while a silent thought or aimless deed emerges from obscurity, and speaks with royal voice through many a century.

To lose sight of this principle in estimating Christianity, and to insist on judging it, not by its matured character in Christendom, not by the *unconscious spirit* of its founders, but by their personal views and purposes, is to overlook the divine in it in order to fasten on the human; to seek the winged creature of the air in the throbbing chrysalis;

and is like judging the place of the Hebrews in history by the court and the proverbs of Solomon, or the value of Puritanism by the sermon of a hill-preacher before the civil war. The primitive Christianity was certainly *different* from that of other ages; but there is no reason for believing that it was *better*. The representation often made of the early church as having only truth, and feeling only love, and living in simple sanctity, is contradicted by every page of the Christian records. The Epistles are entirely occupied in driving back guilt and passion, or in correcting errors of belief; nor is it *always* possible to approve of the temper in which they perform the one task, or to assent to the methods by which they attempt the other. Principles and affections were indeed secreted in the heart of the first disciples which were to have a great future, and to become the highest truth of the world. But it was precisely of these that they rarely thought at all. The Apostles themselves speak slightingly of them, as baby's food; and the great faith in God, the need of repentant purity of heart, with the trust in immortality,—the very doctrines which we should name as the permanent essence of Christian faith,—are expressly declared by them to be the childish rudiments of belief, on which the attention of the grown Christian will disdain to dwell.* And what did they prefer to these sublime truths as the nutriment of their life and the pride of their wisdom? Allegories about Isaac

* "Wherefore leaving the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection;—not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith in God, of the doctrine of baptisms and of laying on of hands, and of the resurrection of the dead, and of the everlasting judgment."—Heb. vi. 1, 2. Comp. v. 11–14. *See* also 1Cor. iii. 1, 2. "And I, brethren, was not able to speak to you as to spiritual, but as to carnal,—as to babes in Christ: I fed you with milk, not with meat: for ye were not then able to bear it." On which De Wette remarks: "γάλα, *Milch*, die Anfangsgründe, Heb. vi. 1.: τὸν τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ λόγον, wozu gehört *μετάνοια, πίστις εἰς θεόν, ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν, κρίμα αἰώνιον*, &c." Kurze Erklärung der Briefe an die Corinther: in loc.

and Ishmael, parallels between Christ and Melchisedec, new readings of history and prophecy to suit the events in Palestine, and a constant outlook for the end of all things.* These were the grand topics on which their minds eagerly worked, and on which they laboured to construct a consistent theory. These give the form to their doctrine, the matter to their spirit. These are what you will get, if you go indiscriminately to their writings for a creed: and these are no more Christianity than the pretensions of Hildebrand or the visions of Swedenborg. The true religion lies elsewhere, just in the things that were *ever present with them but never esteemed.* Just as your friend may spend his anxiety on his station, his usefulness, his appearance and repute, and fear lest he should show nothing deserving your regard, while all the time you love him for the pure graces, the native wild flowers of his heart:—so do the choicest servants of God ever think one thing of themselves, while they are dear to him and revered by us for quite another. "The weak things" in the Church not less than in "the World, hath he chosen to confound the mighty; the simple, to strike dumb the wise; and things that are not, to supersede the things that are."

The life of Christ in Palestine was a brief phenomenon, justly regarded by every disciple as the point of divinest brilliancy in the course of Providential affairs. At the time, and when it was in recent remembrance, little notice was taken of its intrinsic character and real peculiarities; its moral perfectness and spiritual beauty is handed down to us by those who perceived it very imperfectly; and had he perceived it himself, the reality would have vanished in the perception. From that gracious life itself all eyes were turned away, in order to join it on to the Past which it finished, and to the Future which it began. "How did it come out of the ages which it closed? What did it augur

* Comp. Gal. iii. 15–20. iv. 21–31.; Heb. v. 4–14. vii.; Matt. xvi. 28; Luke ix. 27; 1 Thess. iv. 15. v. 23; 2 Thess. iii. 5; Phil. i. 6, 11., iv. 5; 1 Cor. i. 7; iv. 5; James v. 7, 8; 1 Peter iv. 7.

in those which it led on?" These were the two questions with which the first disciples, with the power of his soul sleeping silently at heart, consciously and exclusively concerned themselves: and neither of these, as time has shown, were they able to answer right. They connected him with the Past, by regarding him as the foretold of Prophets and the descendant of Kings,—as the crowning gift for which alone the ages had prepared the way, and whose step of approach pressed its visible trace on the soil of ancient history. Yet is it now confessed that, when he came, he was *not* such an one as Isaiah saw or Daniel ever dreamt; that no prediction had spoken of him, no type suggested him; and that it is only his shadow, cast by the fond light of retrospective love, that lies upon the old Hebrew centuries. They connected him with the Future, by carrying forward to his account in years to come the visions which his stay, as they supposed, was too short to realize; by assigning to him a quick return, to finish what yet was unfulfilled. The suffering, the scorn, the rejection of men, the crown of thorns, were over and gone: the diadem, the clarion, the flash of glory, the troop of Angels, were ready to burst upon the world, and might be looked for at midnight or at noon. Yet, though a sentinel gazed wherever a Christian prayed, all the watchmen died without the sight: the storm swept down the horizon of time, and for many a century the sky has now been clear. The whole Messianic doctrine, by which the Apostles found their Master's Providential place, was in its very essence the fabric of a dream; a landscape traced upon the clouds by the creative eye of faith and disappointment. To discuss whether Jesus was the Messiah, is even more unmeaning than the question whether John the Baptist were Elijah; for Elijah was at least a person, but Messiah was only a conception. It was from trying Jesus by this conception, and endeavouring to force him into its realization, that Judas was tempted to betray him. And it is by perversely applying the same test, and coercing his spirit into the

Hebrew framework,—by compelling him to belong to a system, instead of permitting him to be what he is in himself, that divines, with kiss of reverence scarcely less fatal, have delivered him bound to be defaced by priests and compared with rulers. Seeking Christianity in the creed of the first age, we have necessarily fallen in with this notion, that 'Jesus is the Messiah;' and have thus set up the chief Judaic error as the chief Christian verity. Among his countrymen this conception was natural and inevitable: it was the human condition on which alone they could recognize in him what was divine: it was the only key with which their culture supplied them for interpreting the mysterious impression which he made upon their hearts: it was their ideal formula for perfect life: and when he was before them, the real and the ideal presence could not but coalesce. It must be obvious however to every thoughtful reader, how much the story and portraiture of Christ have been deformed by the tyranny of this haunting idea. It is plain that he himself dwelt little, if at all, upon his *official claims:* it was to be kept a secret what he was;—a precaution which could never be reported of him, if he had notoriously held and proclaimed himself to be the Messiah, and framed his course in conformity with that conception. The deficiency seems to have been felt by the Evangelists, and it is overcompensated by their zeal. Their principle of selection, in the biographical fragments they have left, appears to have been to take what would best identify Jesus with the Messiah: and so, his inward struggles of soul are turned into an official victory over Satan; demons are brought upon the stage to give preternatural witness to his dignity; miracles of blessed healing are spoiled by thoughts and arguments of exorcism; and counterfeit meanings are put on the old Poets and Prophets to fit the unexpected shape of new events. A Messianic goal is evidently set up in the disciples' mind, and Jesus is exhibited to us as *living towards it*, and ever nearing it. Yet beneath this artificial disguise, quite a different life gleams through; a life rather

of shrinking and recoil from the very end he is set to reach; a life, not upon system at all; shaping itself forth by the efflorescence of an inward beauty rather than the solicitations of an outward aim; a life of the Spirit that bloweth where it listeth, wandering with the breath of sweet affections over the verdure of good hearts, and carrying the South-wind of Pity to soften the fallow and bring blossoms from the clod. That divine life without a plan, that free movement from the determination of love and thought within, that inspired soliloquy in action, is the real soul of the entire religion: and it reaches us, alas! only in refracted lights, or through unintended openings in the crust of Messianic doctrine. Observe, too, the effect of this Judaic medium upon the *titles of honour* which disciples apply to Christ:—a matter of no small moment, for as the relation is described, such will the relative affection tend to be. We are taught, with a tenacity forbidding alteration now, to call Jesus "our Lord;" and the Apostles expressly call themselves his slaves (δοῦλοι). To them these words were natural; exactly describing the relation present to their minds. Their faith was as much political as religious. As God himself was chiefly conceived of under the image of absolute *Sovereignty*, so was Messiah to them the appointed *Satrap* of this world. When he came, he would come *to reign*, bearing with him the united powers of Administrator, Judge, and King. And according to the Oriental type, whatever he *ruled*, that would he *possess;* and all that his subjects had would be received as favours from his hand, and held as fiefs by his investiture. Under the solemn expectation of the world's immediate end, the kingdom of Christ was to take the place of the kingdoms of the earth; and the disciples, in looking for this revelation, felt themselves citizens of a supernatural *State*, and subjects of a resistless *Lord*. In rude ages and amid feudal customs it has perhaps been no unhappy thing that this image of servitude has been transmitted into the conceptions of faith: it may have touched with some sanctity an inevitable submission, and mingled a sentiment

of loyalty with religion. But the *external relation* of serf and lord is no type of the *internal relation* of spirit to spirit, which alone constitutes religion to us. To God himself, with all his infinitude, we are not *slaves;* we are not his *property*, but his children; he regards us, not as *things* but as *persons;* he does not so much command us, as appeal to us; and in our obedience it is not his *bidding* that we serve, but that divine Law of Right of which he makes us conscious as the rule of His nature only more perfectly than of ours. To obey him as *slaves*, in fear, and with an eye upon his power, is, with all our punctuality and anxiety, simply and entirely to *disobey* him: nor is anything precious in his sight, except the free consent of heart with which we seize what is holy to his thought and embrace what is in harmony with his perfection. Still less can we be *slaves* to Christ, who is no Autocrat to us, but our freely followed leader towards God; the guide of our pilgrim troop in quest of a Holy land; who gives us no law from the mandates of his Will, but only interprets for us, and makes burn within us in characters of fire, the law of our own hearts; who has no power over us, except through the affections he awakens and the aspirations he sets upon the watch. We have emerged from the Religion of *Law*, whose only sentiment is that of *obedience to Sovereignty;* we have passed from the religion of *Salvation*, whose life consists in *gratitude to a Deliverer;* and we are capable only of a religion of *Reverence*, which bows before the *authority of Goodness*. And in the infinite ranks of excellence, from the highest to the lowest, there are no lords and slaves; the dependence is ever that of internal charm, not of external bond; the *authority* represented and impersonated in another and a better soul has its living seat within our own: and in this true and elevating worship, the more we are disposed of by another, the more do we feel that we are our own. This is a relation which the political terms of the expected theocracy are ill adapted to express; and if we

have required many centuries to grope our way to this clearest glory of religion, to disengage it from the impure admixture of servile fear and revolting presumption; if it has taken long for us to melt away in our imagination the images of thrones and tribunals, of prize-givings and prisons, of a police and assizes of the universe; if only at the eleventh hour of our faith, the cloud has passed away, and shown us the true angel-ladder that springs from earth to heaven, the pure climax of souls whereon each below looks up and rises, yet each above bends down and helps; the discovery which brings such peace and freedom to the heart, has been delayed by the mistaken identification of the entire creed of the first age with the essence of Christianity. Now that God has shown us so much more, has tried the divine seed of the gospel on so various a soil of history, and enabled us to distinguish its fairest blossoms and its choicest fruits, a much larger meaning than was possible at first must be given to the purpose of his revelation. Even to Paul, Christ was mainly the great representative of a theocratic idea; and was in no other sense an object of *spiritual* belief than that he was not on earth and mortal, but in heaven and immortal. That *faith* in Christ, which then prominently denoted belief in his appointed return and *allegiance* to him as God's viceroy in this world, is now transformed into quite a different thing. It is altogether a moral and affectionate sentiment; an acknowledgment of him as the highest impersonation of divine excellence and inspired insight yet given to the world; a trust in him as the only realized type of perfection that can mediate for us between ourselves and God; a faithfulness to him, as making us conscious of what we are and what God and our conscience would have us to be. It is vain to pretend that revelation is a fixed and stereotyped gift. It was born, as the divinest things must be, among human conditions; and into it ever since human conditions have perpetually flowed. The elements of Hebrew thought surrounded the sacred centre at first, and have been

erroneously identified with it by all Unitarian Churches in every age. The Hellenic intellect afterwards streamed towards the fresh point of life and faith, and gathered around it the Metaphysical system of Trinitarian dogma, in which orthodox communions of all times have, with parallel error, sought the essence of the Gospel. The true principle of the religion has been *secreted in both, and consisted in neither:* it has lain unnoticed in the midst, in the silent chamber of the heart, around which the clamour of the disputatious intellect whirls without entrance. The agency of Christ's mind as the expression of God's moral nature and providence, and as the realized ideal of beauty and excellence,—this is the power of God and the wisdom of God, which has made vain the counsels of the world, and baffled the foolishness of the Church. This is the Gospel's centre of stability,—"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

LIFE ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN IN THE HEAVENS.

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"Who serve under the image and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God, when he was about to make the tabernacle: for See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed thee on the Mount.—HEBREWS viii. 5.

A PETTY rigour of belief insists, and a no less petty unbelief superfluously denies, that it was suitable for God to give mechanical orders to the Jewish prophet about the fabric of the sacred tent; to enumerate the stakes and rods, to measure the curtains, to count the loops and rings, to choose the quality of the linen and the dyes of the fleece; and even to set up a miraculous model to preclude mistake of the colours or the form. Estimate as we may the details of the history, the fact, I suppose, remains, of which my text seizes the essence, viz.,—that the Tabernacle was a place of *Worship*, an enclosure whence unholy things were banished and where God alone was sought; that in dealing with such a design Moses was conscious of preparing a shrine, not for his own tastes and fancies, but for a Divine Real Presence; whose living glory had, in the invisible world, better media and purer recognition than our poor copies could at all approach. He was not a first-hand architect, contriving for human use, but a reproducer, by symbol only, of a meaning elsewhere far surpassed: and the idea which he embodied had no regard, like the project of an ordinary house, to transient wants of shelter and sleep, relative

* Opening of a new Chapel, Huddersfield, December 29, 1854.

only to the life of man, but coincided with superhuman and eternal truth, and found expression, for those who could rise into it, in the highest representations of the universe. The *Jewish* record places the pattern which he followed "on the *Mount*;"—at the royal summit of this world, the lonely peaks that, while rooted in the human earth, spring into its purest air and look furthest over its habitable plains. *Christian*, and even Rabbinic, tradition removed the model into "*Heaven*";—the region which is quite beyond the human and merges the earth in a wider scheme;—the storehouse of the perfect and eternal;—the infinite realm, cut off from the touch of cloud and the interception of light. In any case, the House of Prayer is with us no original device, no local creation; and though planted on the feverish desert and the parching plain of life, is no mere product of misery and illusion, but is a transcript from a sublimer realm and reflects the usages of the blest. A man upon his knees, bent low upon the ground, or looking up with clasped hands and streaming tears!—strange spectacle to those who approach him from below!—a thing unique among the animals! but, if you will only come the other way, turning out to be a borrowed attitude well-known in higher regions and caught by sympathy with greater natures. This deep faith it is that constitutes the pith of that old tradition about that Heavenly Tabernacle;—that human worship is the lowly representation, the image refracted through our atmosphere and its sad rain, of Divine Realities; and that the copy, as it moves from station to station of history and is never absent from the track and wanderings of humanity, is not a mere asylum of the moment, but a "Tabernacle of *Witness*" to the eternal archetype.

So long as there remains a place "where Prayer is wont to be made," life cannot wholly lose its uplifted look, or quit the conscious presence of invisible relations brooding round it. Just as a Dwelling-house proclaims, 'Here are creatures that stand in need of *shelter*'; as the Market

attests the habit of *exchange;* as the Court is the footprint of *justice* on the earth; so does the Church betoken a being to whom time and nature are not all; before whose face are realities other than meet the eye; who knows that he does not belong unto himself; and who sighs to resemble a standard adored in an unseen world. In Devotion there is this great peculiarity;—that it is neither the *work* nor the *play* of our nature, but is something higher than either, more ideal than the one, more real than the other. All human activities besides are one of these two things;—either the mere aim at an external end, or the mere outcome of an inner feeling. On the one hand, we plough and sow, we build and navigate, that we may win the adornments and securities of life: on the other hand, we sing and dance, we carve and paint, that we may put forth the pressure of harmony and joy and beauty breaking from within. Mechanical Toil terminates in a solid product; graceful Art is content with simple expression; but Religion is degraded when it is reduced to either character. It is not a labour of utility; and he who looks to it as a means of safety, to ingratiate himself with an awful God, and bespeak an interest in a hidden future, is an utter stranger to its essence: his habits and words may be cast in its mould, but the spark of its life is not kindled in his heart. When fed by the fuel of prudence, the fire is all spent in fusing it into form; and the finished product is a cold and metal mimicry that neither moves nor glows. Nor is Religion a simple gesture of passion: and to class it with mere natural language, to treat it as the rhythmical delirium of the soul working off an irrepressible enthusiasm, is to empty it of its real meaning and contents, and sink it from a divine attraction to a human excitement. The postures and movements and tones which simply manifest the impassioned mind are content to go off into space and pass away: they direct themselves nowhither: they have no more *object* than a convulsion: they ask only leave to be the last shape of a feeling that must have way: and be the

inspiration what it may, they close and consummate its history. But he who *prays* is at the beginning of aspiration, not at the evaporating end of impulse: he is drawn, not driven: he is not painting *himself* upon vacancy, but is surrendering himself to a Presence real and everlasting. If he flings out his arms, it is not in blind paroxysm, but that he may embrace and be embraced: if he cries aloud, it is that he may be heard: if he makes melody of the silent heart, it is no soliloquy flung into emptiness, but the low-breathing love of spirit to Spirit. Devotion is not the play even of the highest faculties, but their deep earnest. It is no doubt the culminating point of reverence; but reverence is impossible without an object, and could never culminate at all or pass into the Infinite, unless its object did so too. In every case we find that the faculties and susceptibilities of a being tell true, and are the exact measure of the outer life it has to live: and just as many and as large proportions as it has, to just so many and so great objects does it stand related; so that from the axes of its nature you may always draw the curve of its existence. Human worship, therefore, turning to the living God as the infant's eye to light, is itself a witness to Him whom it feels after and adores: it is "the image and shadow of Heavenly things"; the parallel chamber in our nature with that Holy of Holies whither its incense ever ascends.

Whoever truly worships, pouring out the prayer, not of interest and fear, nor chiefly of personal gratitude, but of aspiration, reverence and trust, feels irresistibly assured that he is yielding to no weakness, but is falling into the attitude congenial to higher natures. The fervour whose flush is on him he knows to be nobler than his common mood, and so tending upwards that, as he rises, it will glow the more: and minds, if such there be, that occupy that upper station now, and are less far from the clear face of God, must be not of paler and colder devotion but of richer and intenser hues. And though he cannot see into any upper world and point to the sanction of its adoring ranks,

yet is there not enough even here to make this feeling no vain presumption? Can it be denied that the deep sense of God is a haunting accompaniment of the deepest and grandest men?—that, however it may co-exist with weakness, and absent itself without forfeiture of a certain stormy force, it is ever inseparable from the large and balanced soul, the spring at once of tenderness and strength? Whatever is wise or strong or loving enough in this world to outlast the changes of human admiration will be found to have the tincture of intense Faith. The nation which has most affected the fates of mankind has done so by giving them a Christ. And in each nation, the highest men, whether in thought or action, Socrates, Scipio, Dante, Luther, Pascal, Cromwell, Newton, have not attained their great dimensions without bearing a divine secret in their souls: they have been men of trust and prayer; and, familiar with an Infinite Presence, have attained the stature which throws so grand a shadow over history. Take away from these minds their religion; reduce the philosophers among them to their dialectics and mathematics, the generals to their strategy, the poet to his skill in epic *fiction;* suppose them to think, to act, to sing, for secular profit and entertainment, and not for truth and justice dear eternally to God; and do you not cut out the very pith of their genius and character? Be assured, all visible greatness of mind grows in looking at an invisible that is greater. And since it is inconceivable that what is most sublime in humanity should spring from vision of a thing that is not,—that what is most real and commanding with us should come of stretching the soul into the unreal and empty, that historic durability should be the gift of spectral fancies, we must hold these devout natures to be at One with everlasting Fact,—to feel truly that the august forms of Justice and Holiness are at home in Heaven, the object there of clearer insight and more perfect veneration. There are those who please themselves with the idea that the world will outgrow its

habits of worship; that the newspaper will supersede the preacher and prophet; that the apprehension of scientific laws will replace the fervour of moral inspirations; that this sphere of being will then be perfectly administered when no reference to another distracts attention. But for my own part I am persuaded, that life would soon become intolerable on earth, were it copied from nothing in the Heavens; that its deeper affections would pine away and its lights of purest thought grow pale, if it lay shrouded n no Holy Spirit, but only in the wilderness of space. The most sagacious secular voice leaves after all a chord untouched in the human heart: listening too long to its didactic monotone, we begin to sigh for the rich music of hope and faith. The dry glare of noon-day knowledge hurts the eye by plying it for use and denying it beauty; and we long to be screened behind a cloud or two of moisture and of mystery, that shall mellow the glory and cool the air. Never can the world be less to us, than when we make it all in all.

Direct worship is then a *conscious* conformity to a pattern in the Heavens. But *all* life, so far as it is good and holy, is still an approximation of the mind, even though it be by unconscious instinct, to a Divine image. There are men of whom you cannot speak as being conspicuously religious; who even present a nature hard and unimpressible to the appeals of devout sentiment and doctrine; whom a sluggish imagination and a genius too much entangled in practical affairs may embarrass with doubts and perplexities in positive religion:—but whose cheek burns at a tale of injustice; who turn away with loathing from meanness and cruelty; whose word is a rock, rooted in the very substance of the world; who are stirred to their inmost depths by the spectacle of heroic honour and incorruptible fidelity; and who themselves win from others, if not noisy admiration, yet the silent trust and steady dependence which are yielded only to moral strength and wisdom. Are these men then without religion? Is there

nothing which prevails over them with truly godlike power? Deficient as their creed may be, and little as they may kindle at the name of God, they too are not without their worship, though you may deny it the name and they themselves would be the last to call it so. They follow through life an unspeakable image of justice and veracity, which shines upon them as entirely divine; which subdues them with silent admiration; commands the current of their blood and the fountain of their tears; and makes their firm-knit manhood pliant and tender as a child before the appeal of injured right or generous sacrifice. They may *say* nothing of the viewless ideal that draws them hither and thither by the beckoning finger of the Right and Good: they may not even put it before them, so as to know that it is there: they may seem to be engaged only with worldly transactions, to have no taste or capacity for spiritual concerns, and spend themselves wholly on their home, their business, or the council-chamber of affairs: but all the while there is a secret worship of their heart, that directs the labour of their hands and the very courses of their thought; and which shows itself in the order of their house, the stability of their concerns, the rectitude of their administration, and their willingness, notwithstanding an economic taste, to sacrifice in the State material to moral ends. There may be in such men ever so much natural dumbness,—a turbid flow of tumbled thoughts,—an apparent want of colour and clearness in all their words: but it is only that all their high devout art is spent upon their life itself, in cutting out its adamant into a shape that may stand without shame beneath the sky, and represent the naked truth and goodness of the universe. They are haunted with a genuine though unconfessed reverence which is really master of the soul, and whose suggestions their Will, as the skilled labourer, is ever trying to express. Theirs is Religion in a secondary and less conscious state; more akin to instinct and less evolved into definite belief and rational thought; less elevated therefore and nobly

human than the religion of clear and open eye, that knows what it worships, yet worships with enthusiasm none the less. But religion it still is; an actual faith in the just, and true, and good, as the Divine eternal Law and base of God's universe, more solid than men can stir, more real than all appearance. And in constructing their life upon this model, they frame it by an Image on the Mount, whose severe beauty is secure above human reach.

The same rule,—of struggling into conformity with a pattern in the heavens,—seems to hold even in the realm beneath our human life. Unconscious nature itself appears in every province to be aiming at a type which is never fully realized. Of no Kind of being can you produce a perfect sample: in the nearest to finished beauty, some little fleck of disappointment is sure to dash the boundlessness of joy. The splendour of the tropic tree is hurt by its leaves torn to ribbons with the wind; in the glory of a Southern clime you miss the rich and tender green; the birds of brightest plumage have no song; and where the waters of the sea are greenest, and the forests of the earth are grandest, terrors and monsters most abound. Yet is there ever a pressure of tendency towards more faultless forms: and no sooner are favouring conditions adjusted, than nature vindicates her design, and enters upon her divine heritage of beauty. Thus do all things obtain their upward look, and show how the thoughts of God push themselves through the refractory conditions of the finite into nearer and riper expression; so that the whole visible creation is an imitation of the invisible, a copy from a higher pattern in the heavens, a drifting of the material and earthly towards the spiritual and divine. Only, this takes place with entire unconsciousness, and so partakes in no degree of the character of religion; it constitutes the third and lowest stage of attractive relation between the perfectness of God and the imperfection of his creatures. Piety and aspiration are the full, purposed, open-eyed declaration of faith in the divine love and

holiness as the living power which rules the universe and humanity. Justice and rectitude are the half-conscious and instinctive confession of reliance on Divine goodness and truth as the eternal foundation of all things. And the silent beauty of outward nature, ever pressing on the first opportunity into higher and more perfect forms, is the blind homage of creation to the spirit of thought and loveliness which penetrates and moulds it. So that throughout all its scope, from its highest to its lowest department, this universe shapes all things according to a divine pattern on the Mount, and is the image and shadow of more heavenly things.

You, fellow Christians, in the very act of raising this structure, proclaim your deliberate purpose to conform yourselves, your life, your love, your will, to a pattern in the Heavens; to look beyond the mixed elements and poor counterfeits of the world as it is; to conquer and cast out its evil and imperfection; and propose as your aim nothing less than the divine and spotless model that is hid with God. In different ages, a different pattern is shown to his prophets on the Mount; always what is fairer and more august than can be seen in the restless plain of life below; but not always greater than prophets yet to come may see when the eye of the soul is strengthened for more resplendent things. The Jewish Tabernacle was perhaps not, in itself and for ever, the most beautiful of objects; nay, for aught I know, may be surpassed every day by the achievements of the upholsterer and cabinet-maker; but it was at any rate fairer and richer than aught else around, and was unique among the tents of Israel. And their later Zion, as her own minstrel sung, was still "the perfection of beauty." Yet God has reserved still better things for us; and another object draws our perception than the smoke of altars and the vestments of priests. The Soul of Christ, the sinless, risen, and immortal, is the pattern shown to us; shown first upon the field of history, and on the paths of this living world, and then taken to the heavens, to look down thence

on the uplifted eye of faith and love through successive generations. Towards that likeness it is that *you* aspire; not forgetting that even this is not the ultimate of good, but itself a Tabernacle of the Holy of holies, an expression of the Highest of all,—the "*Image* of the invisible God." Here then may the blessed resemblance shape itself more and more purely in your souls! Here may the Word of God become clothed again with human reality, and be made flesh and dwell among the living, full of grace and truth, and know the pulsations of a divine humanity, and work the works of mercy, and speak with the lips of power!

COMMERCIAL MORALS.

PREFACE.

THE questions discussed in these pages are usually supposed to be less proper to the Pulpit than to the Exchange. Yet the Minister of a congregation drawn chiefly from the mercantile classes of a modern Tyre, cannot be indifferent to the special duties and temptations of the daily life around him; and may now and then feel oppressed by a "burden" of warning convictions, of which it would be unfaithful not to deliver his conscience. Moved by such impulse, the preacher prepared the following Sermon in the course of his ordinary ministrations. It is published by the desire of many of its hearers, whose judgment, on matters of commercial morality, is formed from large experience as well as conscientious reflection. In the printed text are a few passages which they will not recognize, and which would have extended the Sermon beyond the limits usually conceded to the preacher.

PARK-NOOK, PRINCE'S PARK, LIVERPOOL,
December 10, 1856.

OWE NO MAN ANYTHING.*

"Owe no man anything, but to love one another."—ROMANS xiii. 8.

THIS is a very simple-minded precept to proceed from the native of a mercantile city, himself engaged in trade, and member of a race not unconnected with the credit system of the world. It is not precisely the counsel which the Jew is in the habit of addressing to the Gentile; and shows in the converted Apostle a temper strangely indifferent to the agitations of the Synagogue and the money market. Could he have prevailed on all Rome (whose Christian community he was addressing) to act on his injunction, what would have become of the Hebrew banker and broker, when no noble wanted a mortgage on his lands or a loan on his cargo of slaves, and no patrician spendthrift any longer executed a post-obit, and greedy officials ceased to dabble in time-bargains? If in our own day the precept were to acquire a sudden force, and all operations to be closed which violated it, what Encumbered Estates Act, nay, what political Revolution could be compared with the result? Were the Apostle to carry his point, and bring about a general settling-day to-morrow, how many shops and offices would be open next morning? How many acres, and houses, and ships would stand in the same names? If, by a universal winding-up, every property was to go home to its owner, every engagement to be pressed into realization, and all fictitious footing to be destroyed, how many that are now first would be last,—when the

* Hope Street Church, Liverpool, November 30, 1856.

balance was struck and the new leaf turned,—and the last first? So utterly at variance with the whole social system appears the Apostle's precept, that it is no wonder if next in his mind to the conception of a World out of debt, stood the belief of the World at its end. If it be wrong to owe, it is not right to borrow; and if no man may borrow, neither may any lend; and if no lending be allowed, the fertilizing flow of capital from its head-waters to the thirsty spots of society is at an end; the world is gorged at one place and starved at another, with no health at either: unknown resources of the earth and ocean, of the quarry and the mine, of the forest and the field, sleep unused, for want of a magic power, which is *there* all the while if we will but let it move. Were it left to the actual possessors of wealth alone to propel it on its course, and work it through its applications, who can say how slow would be the productiveness of industry, and how scanty the exchanges of nations?

Yet, when we turn from this outside action on the World to the inner effects on Individual Character, we can scarcely miss a certain truthful charm in the precept, "Owe no man anything, but to love one another." To have no debt but the eternal debt of love,—to pay freely to affection without arrest from the preference-claims of justice undischarged,—to disengage the problems of a pure heart from oppressive and limiting conditions,—to live among men with no other accounts than we have with our children and our God,—this surely is to escape from a thousand fears and temptations, and win the very liberty of faith. This freedom from entanglement is the goal which most men hope to reach; and in struggling towards it, the conscientious carry the fetters of many a scruple, and the heedless slip the foot on dangerous ground. This clear state is, by general consent, the position appropriate to those who are devoted to the higher concerns of our humanity,—the servants of Truth, the interpreters of Beauty, the guides of Nations, the prophets of Religion. It is the preparation,

without which few would wish to face the greater crises of experience,—the prostration of sorrow, the call to heroic duty, the visible approach of death! If then you would feel it well to be free of care, when you step into the shadow of sacred hours or go home to the embrace of God; if the nobler and more ideal functions of life revolt from money complications; if an embarrassed philosopher,—an indebted bishop,—a bailiff in the scientific observatory or the prophet's chamber,—affords an image of humiliating incongruity: there must be a region of human character,—and *that* the highest,—in which the Apostle's precept emerges from an economic absurdity into a native and congenial wisdom. We might treat it therefore as a "Counsel of Perfection";—as a rule not perhaps unconditionally binding on all of us as we are, but still indicating the limit towards which all are to press, and which "as many as would be perfect" will seize at once. There are apparently cases in human life in which our rules describe and distinguish not so much the *absolutely right and wrong*, as *the better and the worse;* and we may recommend and revere the greater, without warrant altogether to condemn the less. Within the individual conscience indeed,—in the private account between the soul and her God,—this sliding scale of duty has no place: *there*, the *better intimation* is the *sole escape* from guilt; and whatever is short of our best possibility must incur the remorse of absolute wrong. But the bystander knows not the range and register of each private soul; he cannot tell how far up the ascent of goodness her conscious insight goes; and though he may exhibit and dispose in their rightful glory all the steps, from their base on earth to their landing in heaven, he may condemn those persons only who either fail to reach what all men see, or fall from a rank they had already seized: and he must not presume to demand from every chance neighbour to-day a height of excellence that may not be discerned until to-morrow. God only knows the wise, deep hearts to which he has revealed high missions with the clearness

of a heavenly call; and when his summons draws forth the Saints and Heroines of humanity, it is for us to own indeed and revere the voice, but not to repeat it in the market-place and at the corners of the streets, requiring every earnest man to become a St. Francis, and every gifted lady a Florence Nightingale.

Even a "Counsel of Perfection," however, must be reconcileable with the conditions of human life through which we are to rise into harmony with it. The same Holy Will is Lawgiver for the private conscience and for the social world; and there can be no real variance between the highest obligations of the one and the imperious exigencies of the other. Grant that the injunction "Owe no man anything, but to love one another" may have had some reference to an expected close of human things, and may belong to the same class with the inference, "The time is short," "I would have you without anxiety." Still, the temper which is alone suitable to the sublimest moment cannot be out of place in any other: the last act of the piece is but the development of all the rest; when the soul achieves the catastrophe to which every incident and experience has converged. To the moral attitude and position most fit for a world drifting towards its account there must be *something analogous* in the world while yet continuous: nor can there be one rule of good for its probation, and another for its judgment. I venture therefore to believe that *the spirit*, the *mood of mind*, the conscious *security against injuring others*, the *exemption from disabling cares*, the *openness to genial affection*, implied in the Apostle's words, are for ever and for all men inherent elements of the Christian character; and if we sacredly guard these, whilst we translate his precept into terms of continuous duration and an abiding world, it will prove to have still for us its moral and its rebuke.

It would no doubt be pedantic to interpret the words "Owe no man anything" into a universal obligation to the ready-money system. In a world whose transactions take

time, and where the circle of exchange is of wide circumference, an interval, often considerable, must interpose between the commencement and the completion of an engagement; and it were absurd to make a sin out of this necessary incident of commerce, and to regard as an offender every man who has a pending compact. Nay, it is possibly this period of suspense,—when men part with their own in reliance on another, and sleep soundly not amid guarded possessions but with their treasures scattered to the four quarters of the earth, and look as proudly on a few names in their books, as they would on broad acres of park or field,—that gives scope to the moral qualities exercised in mercantile affairs;—the cautious vigilance at first, the honourable trust at last, the scrupulous pause before the promise, the sacred firmness afterwards. The merchant who has a credit at the bank, or insured goods afloat, in clear excess of his existing obligations can, with only formal correctness, be said to "owe anything." How long, under such conditions, the actual settlement may remain in suspense, is indeed an important problem of *moral prudence*. The term of credit must vary in different affairs. Its sweep of duration should follow as closely as possible that of the reciprocal dealings themselves; a *week's* account being as long for retail purchases in the next street, as a year for exchanges across half the world. Whoever requires more time than this rule would give him, and has become dependent on further delay, has clear warning that his footing is unsound. Credit is essentially a reliance upon character during the currency of a transaction; and with the cycle of the transaction it should ever be susceptible of close. Restrained within these limits, the mere existence of incomplete and unrealized transactions constitutes no offence against the Apostle's precept, *provided the balance-sheet which records them be at every moment unambiguously right*, and be reviewed at intervals too short for danger to creep in. This is the one point on which the question of *integrity* surely turns. And here it is that, to the

eye of the mere outward observer, the modern notions of honour seem to be in danger of deplorable decline. There ought to be no difference on these questions between the invariable sentiment of the Christian Moralist and the feeling of the man of business. But in the rapid expansion of relations and the haste of human affairs practices slide insensibly into existence and get a footing as usages, before any conscience has time to estimate them; and when they have won the sanction of prescription, they soon shape consciences to suit them, and laugh at the moral critic as a simpleton, and hurry on to the crash of social retribution.

Thus, one thing, I must confess, has ever remained a mystery to me, and seems unmistakably to violate the Apostle's precept "Owe no man anything;"—that a man who *has nothing* should feel easy in *borrowing something;* or a man that has *half*, in borrowing *double*. If indeed the loan be virtually or contingently a *gift*, from persons able and anxious to serve him at such cost, there may be nothing to condemn. And only thus, you will perhaps assure me, can the case really occur; for in the open market such a resourceless borrower could gain no attention. But there are countless intermediate instances, constituting probably nine-tenths of the whole, in which by appeal to the good-nature of friends, or the trustingness of sisters and other relatives, a trader whom no one purposes to endow and whose bond no money broker would take up, comes into command of funds for which he cannot give security. In such case he undertakes a trust which he is not in a condition to assume. It is not enough that he is conscious of the *will*,—he is bound to know his *power*,—to discharge it. Failing this, he does but hand over to another the risks which are nominally his own,—a thing from which surely it needs no generosity, and but little nicety of justice, to shrink. I know it is said, that superfluous capital is glad to meet with empty-handed capacity and character to turn it to account. As a rule, however, if those hands have always been empty, I should doubt their fitness to become

suddenly full: and if they eagerly take what is offered and betray no inner suspicion of danger, I doubt the fineness and solidity of character, which are assumed as the ground of trust. The abundance of capital will be a moral curse, if it tempts us to invert the healthy order of nature and old usage, . . . that a man must earn for himself ere he has a right to borrow from another, and must mortgage what he has for the use of what he has not. The scruple is not less wise than it is conscientious which forbids us *to take on trust more than we can give in pledge:* and whoever is in haste to break through its restraints is anxious to trade upon a high character which he has not resolution to attain. It is the prior discipline of care and patience, the Spartan bread of toil and self-denial, the slow command of wages saved, the cautious use of that incipient store, that lay the true foundation for the merchant's thrift and faithfulness; and in proportion as this schooling is dispensed with, and great resources are flung into the hands of mere administrative agents, who touch what is others' ere they have handled their own, we must expect the spread of looseness and dishonour.

The same principle which condemns hollowness at the beginning forbids fictitious inflation in the continuance of a business, and requires of every honest man *a strict and well-ascertained limit to the transactions which he bases on a given capital.* I am not so presumptuous as to pronounce the ratio of that limit. I know well that it will be differently stated by judges of equal uprightness and experience, and that it cannot be constant for every kind of mercantile concern. But a right limit for each there assuredly *is;* and whoever has not a clear conception where it lies in his own affairs, and does not keep so far within it as to forego advantage to himself rather than bring hazard upon others, is chargeable, if not with fraudulent intent, at least with unprincipled incompetency. Every engagement taken beyond that line he has a decreasing chance of fulfilling; every new creditor is more

likely to become his victim; every fresh stock-taking to show less manageable figures. The appetite for extension, once having passed the healthy bounds, grows voracious as an atrophy; the business consumes whatever it can lay hands upon, and dies itself mere skin and bone. The reckless practice of incurring immense liabilities with no reserved base at all, or only enough to support a small speculative average of differences, occupies in reality, be the suffrages in its favour ever so many, no higher moral level than the turf or the gaming-table. And if this is true of *bonâ fide* trade, overhanging too far and towering too high for its area of support, what shall we say of that spurious traffic in the mere vicissitudes of price, which is conducted without any real exchange by men who have simply the hardihood to bet beyond their means, and in which none can gain but by another's loss? What is it thst makes commerce an honourable and humanizing thing? —that mutual advantage is inseparable from it. What is it that makes gambling detestable?—that mutual advantage is impossible in it. And by this certain mark, with the attendant contrast of temper and habits it implies, may any eye distinguish the sphere of creditable business from that of illicit cupidity. The observer of human life cannot fail to remark that the dispositions of men are largely influenced by the kind of property which is their immediate concern. In landed estate there is a fiduciary element which forbids the idea of Duty entirely to escape. The organism of manufacturing industry calls out the faculties for administering capital and governing men, and disciplines the mind to concentration and force. Legitimate commerce, living nearer to the fluctuating margin of affairs and directly entangled in a world-wide net-work of relations, encourages flexibility and breadth more than sustained energy, inclines to the quick venture rather than the sure toil, and creates a taste for the generous more than for the just. The temptations deepen as the wealth that is handled exchanges a fixed for a speculative character. And there is something

intrinsically perilous and demoralizing in habitual dealings with values highly precarious and sensitive to the breath of mere opinion; and unless they are restrained about a solid nucleus of real transactions with material wealth they produce a fever of imagination and dizziness of head, to be feared by all who have an eye of reverence for the ends of life, and mean to keep their seat till the true goal is reached.

On similar grounds it strikes the mere observing moralist as strange that the question can ever be raised; *how long an insolvent*, after discovering the posture of his affairs, may *continue his business in hope of a favourable turn.* The answer of unsophisticated honesty would assuredly be,—Not for one hour on his own responsibility. If counsellors, whose interest gives them a title to advise, after knowing the whole, recommend him to go on, I do not say that the scruple may not be fairly overcome; or if his deficiency is simply due to an unwarrantable style of living, and its conquest is clearly within the reach of practicable retrenchment, he may fairly work through his secret by resolute self-denial. But otherwise, he is no longer master of his own affairs, and is at once usurper and deceiver every hour that he wields them. He can have no right to stake the interests of his creditors still deeper on the new transactions, based upon a lying credit, carried on with the face of a hypocrite, and contingent on successful dissimulation. He is reduced to the condition in which, having nothing of his own, he uses the resources of others, not only without security, but without their leave; treacherously availing himself of the position of power in which their past confidence has misplaced him. It is no sufficient excuse that he has sanguine expectations of benefiting them;—the time has come when their voice, not his, must pronounce upon this hope. In him it coincides too nearly with the procrastination of cowardice and the dread of shame, to avoid the suspicion of self-deception. And the cases, it will be admitted, are actually rare, in which the avowal of

failure has been escaped or alleviated by postponement; while the usual story of delay tells us of an ever-deepening plunge into entanglement, from which little is extricated at last but the stripped and lacerated personality of the bankrupt himself. It is indeed notorious that the plea of concern for "the estate" is for the most part a vain pretence, and that concealment is continued from desire to stave off the evil day; from that skulking fear to confess a wrong which attends the mere feeble and flaccid purpose to do the right. From no temper is so little to be hoped in a world of ceaseless conflict between good and ill. A man vigorously just, conscious of double guilt under evasion and delay, will never rest till he has brought his penalty upon his head, and has his hand set free for the work of reparation; he will be eager for the pain which first arrests the injury he has done. And whoever is otherwise minded betrays that he shrinks from suffering, but in comparison cares not for the sin. Far be it from any Christian heart to refuse gentle and considerate treatment to each erring man: only let it not be on guilty terms; let it be, not for his continuance but for his return; not a human easiness, but a divine recall. The defences frequently put forth for the questionable usages on which I have touched, seem to shed a painful light upon the inner ethics of modern trade. Indicating as they do a wide-spread confusion of sentiment, a drifting judgment without moral compass to steer by in newly-opening latitudes of human affairs, they are more startling to the thoughtful observer than the exceptional cases of individual fraud which less corrupt the popular fancy, because they speak more plainly for themselves.

I am profoundly conscious of the intricacy of many of the problems which lie within the topic I have touched, and possibly the simple aspect which they present to a spectator from without may be qualified by other relations more removed from sight. But there is also a fresh source of moral danger in this very complexity of modern business,

and the abstract mode in which it is carried on. In simple times, the process of buying and selling is a living, concrete affair, between visible persons; in which man meets man, looks him in the face, crosses his threshold, can picture to himself his family, and has felt the grasp of his hand. Thus, the human affections, the natural feelings that kindle beneath the light of another's eye, come in aid of mercantile integrity and truth. Who would not be more ashamed of a slipperiness towards one whose respectable image is in his mind, than towards a mere name upon his books? In proportion as men's mutual affairs become complicated, the personal element is superseded by files of paper forms; the vast majority of the people with whom you deal are out of sight, and business almost ceases to be human, and works itself by a kind of mechanical fate. It becomes apparently a dealing, less with men than with things. It requires in this state an intenser and more spontaneous conscience to keep it right. The moral significance of acts has to be traced through technical instruments and mystifying symbols, which, even to the most practised interpreter, keep the concrete facts at a distance from the imagination. Could all the papers of an insolvent house be suddenly translated into the actual life they represent,—could the sorrows they contain look out from their midst, the broken promises speak, the bitter injuries complain, the scattered families protest,—the blindest would see the truth, and the hardest be pierced with compunction. But, as it is, the real story is never read; it is vain to expect a just appreciation of its incidents, one by one; as well might you appeal to repentance through an algebraic formula, or ask a personal affection for the lay-figures of a lawyer's argument. And as the moral sense is less helped by the natural affections, so is the understanding more apt to be bewildered by the tangle of intricate relations, and to lose its directness and accuracy of vision. Hence again a further risk of unsteady uprightness; for nothing so favours the chances of evil as a hazy

and puzzled mind, that cannot see its way, and knows not precisely whereabouts it is. It is in this winking twilight that the tempter ever comes, and makes his stealthy approaches to the groping, stumbling will. It was the proverbial complaint of garrulous Greece, that "the tongue is apt to outrun the mind"; and it might be the confession of practical England, that action blunders on in front of thought, and therefore at the mercy of many a poor decoy. The haste of our business is too much for the slowness of our genius; and we find ourselves in the midst of action ere we well know what we ought to do. The telegraph asks a question and must be charged with a reply. The foreign post is off to-night and will not wait till we have slept. The broker is in the office with the transfer in his hand. The message flies,—half reason and half risk. The letter is despatched with orders to-day, and the calculation how to meet them will be gone-into to-morrow. The signature flows from the rapid pen, and the ravelled threads of the problem in the mind are cut at a stroke. Who can deny the fortuitous settlement every day of a thousand questions involving right and wrong, on which a prior clearness of judgment is alone qualified to pronounce? And meanwhile the imagination, with less and less precise conception of the parts and human details, is more and more dazzled by the vast sweep of the whole; and is borne further away from the simple integrities by dreams of immeasurable enterprise. It is not wonderful that in the double giddiness of indistinctness within and magnitude without, the moral equilibrium is lost, and instances are frequent of humiliating fall.

Whether, in the ethics of commerce, "the former times were better than these," I would not venture to pronounce. If any one wishes to show from the annals of fraud, that in England every article of traffic was *always* adulterated, and an equal percentage of merchants and bankers, directors and clerks, were *always* knaves, I care not to answer him. The duty of the Christian preacher is to compare the

morals of his day, not with those of another age, but with the standard, at once rational and revealed, of eternal rectitude. From the appeal to *that* standard, the consciousness of it, nay, the belief in it, I fear indeed we are receding. Of any higher rule of obligation than the expectations and mutual understandings of men, of any possible guilt in usages notoriously current, and against which everyone may be on his guard, it is rare to find even a suspicion in the world. Every question is run up into some human custom and convention, and there stops and is laid to rest: as if many voices and much time could make and unmake right and wrong, and it were ours to invent our own laws instead of interpreting and applying God's. This is the root of all our ill. So long as Honour stands with us for no more than a social compact, a level veracity between man and man, it will sway and waver with the fitful winds of opinion, having no rule but the average expectation, no clue through the snares of new problems, no inspiration beyond the ambition of decent repute. It is in the power of this mere secular temper, as by a corrupting touch, soon to turn the gold of our ancient truth into dross; till we are startled by frightful exposures, and amid the false repose of civilization we hear again the Everlasting Voice, "Shall I call them pure that have the wicked balances, and the bag of deceitful weights?" Honour among men is never safe till it passes out beyond them and becomes an understanding and sympathy with God, an embodiment in us of his ever living righteousness. Once restored to its true devoutness, lifted from a human promise to a Divine allegiance, it escapes the region of fluctuation, and acquires an instinct of resistance to the sophistries of selfishness and the hurry of passion. He who is possessed by its spirit is alone likely to thread a faithful way through the dangers of a complex system. For he has an inner hatred of confusion, as the very nest of all potential wrong. He thirsts for perfect clearness in his moral light; and while any dimness

lingers in his conscience, he reverently fears to stir a foot. First, he must sweep every seeming ambush out and see whether guilt be there, and then he can advance with firmness and with joy. Only to the upright, whose heart is lifted thus, does the promised "Light arise in darkness." May the reproach not fall upon this age, that such "Faithful are failing from among men": but still may the words be true, that, whether our merchants are princes or not, our "traffickers are the *honourable* of the earth!"

PARTING WORDS.

PARTING WORDS.*

"Neither is he that planteth anything, nor he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase."—1 CORINTHIANS, iii. 7.

SINKING deep into these words, I touch the only ground of firm anchorage in this agitating hour. 'I am nothing; God is all: let me pass into his will; let me hold on to Him, the Rock; and let the passionate tide of grief, and fear, and love sweep by!' In that thought alone is there any settled calm. When the floods rise high, we are driven from every earthly rest, and forced upon the wing into the upper air. There are times when we *must* set our fluctuating life at a distance beneath us, and float in the great heaven, if we would not be lost; when we are glad to merge ourselves away into a speck of insignificance, and lessen the size of all things mutable and sorrowful by the vastness of the Divine light and space. Eternal things, and they alone, spread a blessed quiet behind the changes of our humanity,—an expanse of mountain verdure over which the sunshine and the shadows play; and *there* we must lay to rest the sadness of an evanescent life. So let it be with us this hour. Let me escape from myself into Him, of whose husbandry I have been the transient instrument; who gave the seed to plant his field, and the showers to water it, and will never cease to provide the increase. And even from you, dear friends, whose parting

* Close of Ministry in Hope Street Church, Liverpool, Sunday, August 2, 1857.

looks, if seen alone, would too much move me, let me half escape into the presence of an auguster band, and steady my uncertain eye by fixing it on those who once were with us, but have passed to the service of a higher world. Yes! those close-filled seats are far from including all I see; behind the visible congregation to which I speak there stands an invisible,—the comrades who once mingled their voices with our hymn,—elders that have laid their burden down,—children snatched at once from the threshold to the crown of life,—*all* that death has promoted from our poor company; and from their shadowy ranks many a sacred image seems to look at me, and many a familiar tone to speak. Yet alas! I know it is but the echo of my own memory; and that "cloud of witnesses" sits silent in the back-ground of the scene. Else, it would shed the truest light upon the past we have spent together, could we know whether they yet think any thought or cherish any love born amid our worship here; whether any snatches of our earthly strains still blend with their saintlier praise; whether they live without change of gospel under change of worlds. They may not tell us. Yet amid the silence of things, I would fain take courage and believe that, when we join to-day in our parting hymn, "The dead and living swell the sound."

The twenty-five years of service which now reach their close, are much to the individual life, and crowded with the spoils of a retiring generation. For each of us, taken one by one, they have doubtless written a long epic story; and in the cabinet of our memory set many a tragedy, and wrung from our hearts lyrics without end. But in the life of a Church, still more in the history of humanity, such a period is but a little segment; barely enabling us to trace the course of movement; and forbidding even the presumptuous to take its measure. Change, however, perceptible change, there must be during an interval so considerable. No quarter-century can pass over a society and a religious connection so open as ours, without altering the

proportions, if not shifting the centre, of development. And whoever has lived with us through that period, and can transport himself back in memory to its commencement, must be aware that the season has somewhat altered for our faith;—that the light and shadows of our religious love fall not precisely as they did; that the words and thoughts which stir us to our depths are not the same;—that the tone of belief and unbelief, the pressure of temptation, the tendencies of reverence and admiration, are all different;—that our relations to the great Christendom of the Past and Present are more genial and domestic, and are passing from outer courtesy to inner sympathy: so that, on the whole, were it possible to reproduce exactly the administration of religion which adequately served the exigencies of the last generation, it would scarcely assuage our living thirst, or find the present secret of our souls. Leave it to narrow-hearted men to treat this change as a reproach to this age or a pride to that, and to dispute whether the morning twilight is fairer than the evening, and spring in the northern hemisphere better than in the southern. Let us rather recognize the seasonal order of God, who adjusts the whole, and sees that it is good. His truth is infinite and is never rounded off; his light an everlasting stream that cannot cease to flow; and so long as faithful men shall humble themselves to be his organs, He will not want for new interpreters. In the very reaction of each period from the spirit of its predecessor, we may see a blessed law of providential oscillation, ever completing the beat of each movement of progress, and sweeping past every resting-point of human vanity. It is the wants of to-day that invite and awaken the strength of to-morrow. Into the spaces of thought and love left cold and vacant in one age rush the enthusiasms of the next; if perhaps by leaving dry and standing some deserted truth, the reflux of a third age will yet correct it. We are all of us children of our time; its temperature reaches to the very pulses of our heart; and when we speak forth what it

gives us to say, we must indeed be *different* from our fathers, but are no *wiser*, unless we disclaim everything but simplicity and faithfulness. With genuine honour then for my predecessors,—with no higher ambition than to be deemed worthy to stand in their succession and be sometimes named with Enfield, Houghton, Yates and Grundy,—I would yet, in surveying my ministry, lay open to you its characteristic conviction, and unreservedly confess its animating spirit. Against any truth committed to others I do not presume to measure it: each one must speak according as he discerns: whether it be little, or whether it be much, I know not; I simply tell the trust which has possessed me from the beginning, and which, I believe, will hold me till I see better than "as through a glass darkly."

The one deep faith, then, which has determined my whole word and work among you, is in *The Living Union of God with our Humanity*. Long did this faith pine obscurely within me, ere it could find its way to any clear joy. It was not enough for me that God should,—as they say,—"*exist;*" it was needful to have assurance that he *lives*. It was a poor thought that he was the *beginning* of all, if he stood aloof from it in its *constancy*. It withered the inmost heart to believe that he dwelt and never stirred in the universal space, and delegated all to inexorable "Laws";—laws that could never hear the most piercing shriek, and looked with stony eyes on the upturned face of agony. It seemed to stain the very heaven to charge him with the origin of human guilt, and represents him as first moulding men into sin, and then punishing them out of it. A mere constructing and legislating God, satisfied to adjust "co-existencies" and establish "successions"; who filled the cold sky, and brooded over the waste sea, and watched upon the mountain-head, and embraced the waxing and waning moon, and suffered the tide of history to sweep through him without heeding its most passionate and surging waves;—a God who wrung from us a thousand sighs that never touched him, who broke us in remorse for

ills that are not ours,—who drew to him, day and night without ceasing, moans of prayer he never answered;—such a One it was a vain attempt really to trust and love. At times the faith in him appeared but to turn the darkness of atheism into flame; and, in its light, the face of this blessed life and universe lost its fostering look, and seemed twisted into an Almighty sarcasm. Nor could I ever feel that the permanent stillness and personal inaccessibility of God was at all compensated by exceptional miracle. An occasional "message" rather serves to render more sensible and undeniable the *usual* absence and silence; nor can the "sender" well say to his servant,—"You go there"—without implying, "I stay here." Merely to fling-in to the Deist's "God of nature" an historical fragment of miracle does little to meet the exigencies of human piety. It is not "once upon a time," it is not "now and then,"—nor is it on the theatre of another's life to the exclusion of our own,—that we sigh to escape from the bound movements of nature into the free heart of God. We pine as prisoners, till we burst into the air of that *supernatural life which He lives eternally:* we are parched with a holy thirst, till we find contact with the running waters of his quick affection. Him *immediately;* Him *in person;* Him in whispers of the day, and eye to eye by night; Him for a close refuge in temptation, not as a large thought of ours but as an Almightiness in himself; Him ready with his moistening dews for the dry heart, and his breathings of hope for the sorrowing; Him always and everywhere living for our holy trust, do we absolutely need for our repose, and wildly wander till we find.

We have no need to go far for this centre of rest; nay, we have only to return home, and believe what is simplest in our own hearts and greatest in the words of Christ. Does the incubus of Nature oppress you? Enter into the life of the Spirit, and you shall throw it off. Are you haunted by the Constancy of Law? Balance it by the perpetuity of Inspiration: and the solid fabric of the

world will melt into a transparent mantle of incarnation. Whatever be the relation of God to the physical universe, —*for us*, who bear his image and receive his Christ, he is the Spirit "that bloweth where it listeth,"—"the Comforter" "that dwelleth in us and never ceaseth to be in us;"—the Holy Guest abiding with the soul that "hath the Father and the Son." I know not how others may conceive the eternal life of God to pass,—in what field they would most readily seek his manifestation,—in what stirrings of power, his distinctive agency. But to me, I do confess, his presence in every lower realm would be a cold unreality,—a Pagan dream,—did I not trace him in the highest of all,—the conscious and knowing spirits of his children: for surely the empty sky, the dead of night, the Arctic frosts, could better spare him, than the overcharged heart and fevered life of our humanity. *There* it is that he has set what is likest to himself; and there that we must look for his favourite abode. Those simple faiths that come we know not whence, those dim suspicions of conscience that creep upon us with authoritative awe, that mysterious sense of an over-arching infinitude pierced with bursts of light when the clouds of our lower mind clear off,—nay, the common promptings of disinterested love, the call to self-sacrifice, the reverence for nobleness and beauty, what are they but the awakening touch of God's indwelling life, the movement of his Spirit among the trembling strings? To the *private soul*, he thus reveals himself in its highest spontaneous affections, ever adding another grace and further insight to those who will be faithful with the first. To our *collective humanity* he comes in that great consent of spirits which arises in the presence of true heroism or sanctity, and constitutes the tendency of an age and the ultimate forces of history. Through all our natural life, individual and social, is the supernatural interfused: and the ideal colours of heaven are spread through the substance of our experience, to transfigure it. In us, however, there is ever a strife between the two. *In Christ alone* is the

reconciliation perfect between the human and the divine; and of the blended natures, the lower yields as a captive, and is, in him, wholly taken up by the higher. This once, was God's idea purely realized. But the same two natures meet in us all: and he is but the exemplar of a perpetual incarnation,—of a living and constant union of God with our humanity.

Such is the faith which has possessed me, not simply as a topic of teaching, but as a principle of life. How far I may have been able to awaken it in you, and by its power to stir in your hearts the waters of healing and consecration, none but the Discerner of spirits knows. But for me it has relieved many problems, and unspeakably enriched the colours and deepened the whole perspective of experience. It has seemed an escape into the Gospel from the Law; and has justified affections that else were beyond their measure or without a plea. It has necessarily affected my teachings and ministry throughout; imparting to them, perhaps, a character of more intensity than breadth; but giving them the only tone in which the Heavenly Word ever passed across my spirit.

Hence, for instance, the urgency with which I have aspired to rise with you out of a religion of *Obedience* into a religion of *Communion:* not only to leave behind the calculations of spiritual prudence and self-interest, but to emerge even from the anxieties of moral self-dependence, and trustfully pass into the hand of God. *Service* is for the distant; *Sympathy*, for the near. And when the Son of God himself speaks to our fellowship—"I call you not servants, I call you friends,"—who shall blame those that cannot shape themselves to orders, but are freely moulded by the gentlest pressures of reverence and love? In spiritual things Resolution is weak, and soon drops the labouring oar; but Faith, spreading her sheet, catches a viewless power, and flies before the winds of heaven. Bare Ethical work under the Moral Law gives a certain Jewish hardness to our individuality: while of *Religion*, and

emphatically of *the Gospel*, it is the function to dissolve the self-reliance utterly away, to lose the personal will in the tides of a Divine perfection, and let ourselves be reconciled by becoming one with the living Spirit of holiness. We have surely enough in this rough world, enough in the battle of affairs, enough in our inherited discipline and tone of thought, to secure the firmness of our self-respect; and to be well able to bear that mellowing of reverence and sweetening of temper, and modest elevation of trust, which flow from the conscious presence of God's life in our humanity.

Hence, too, it has lain very near to me, to foster among us *all the lesser religions* of our inner life,—the genuine admirations which flow into pure and genial hearts from objects short of the highest. The huge chasm which Protestantism usually sinks between "the creature and the Creator," between human loves and divine affection, has ever affrighted me with horror: and I have clung to the Catholic truth, that our veneration for the saints is a minor form of piety, akin in type to the devotion that passes finite bounds. Nature, Art, Character, present to the sincere eye a thousand resting-places for the upward look; aspects of things which, so far from detaining us below, constitute a hierarchy of Divine manifestation, and carry the vision in the ascending direction to the Light of lights. Let us open a kindly heart and take the daily graces, the most transitory beauty, hospitably in. They are just the provision for lifting us over the saddest reproach and most constant sorrow of our experience. Unaided by them, we are apt to carry on at once two different lives that never mingle, the ideal and the actual, the devout and the secular, and to dip in and out by force of influence or season, conscious of mechanical mixture without inner blending and identity. *Now* upon the grass of meditation, *now* on the dusty track of work, we are as if we stepped across the bar of sleep, and we know not which is waking and which is dreaming. The violence of this transition is softened by the ministration of the lesser pieties,—the wonder at wisdom,

the veneration for goodness, the sense of truth and harmony, and the openness to all the expressiveness of things. These affections, clearing out irreverence from the simplest duty, rudeness from the commonest speech, and deformity and negligence from everything, are blessed mediators between the absolutely Divine and the merely Human in our life, and bathe it in the baptismal waters of its first regeneration. I have thought it therefore not altogether foreign to the spirit of this place, to express and foster, as I could, every admiration that can carry the heart to what is purer and higher than itself, and bear it a little way towards the Highest of all. Tell me not that these lesser loves are dangerous as idols, and seduce the soul. As well might you put out the ranks of angels, to secure our allegiance to God.

Again, it is the same sense,—of God's living union with our humanity, which has ever relieved me of all fear and anxiety respecting the issues of enlarging knowledge, scientific or historical. *Here* is the dear and mighty God at home:—why dread any discoveries we may meet abroad? Day by day, from morn to night, under our roof-tree and out upon our fields, in the mind that thinks, in the heart that aspires,—in the nation that strives for the right, in the world that moves on its course, He lives with us, and manifests himself through us, with every variety of good: and what old facts can we have to fear? Why petrify the past, when a present divineness is flowing by? Now that Raffaelle *is dead* and can give us nothing more, it is certainly a loss to find that a picture is not his; but if his genius and pencil were immortal, if, hour by hour, we saw the figures grow and the pure colours spread beneath his touch, why should we wish to fasten on him a doubtful thing? One only care would then be ours, simply, to let him have his own. And where there is a genuine repose of faith,—where we are not shut up in the idea of a transitory Revelation, once for all, whose title-deed is gone if a little ink should fade,—where we realize the breadth and con-

tinuity of Divine manifestation, we shall be of quiet eye to look for light, and of free joy to welcome it. The vanity of "progress" and the shrinking of "conservatism" are egotisms, both unworthy of disciples who should lose themselves, their fancies and their fears in trust of God's infinite realities. If an eagerness to learn and an openness to teach have exceeded in me the measure of your conscious wants, ascribe it, I entreat you, not to any disparagement of simple, contented, restful piety, but to irrepressible interest in all the lines of thought that converge upon the Holy of holies, and a jealous desire to preserve the accord between the fervours of Christian faith and the freshest lights of knowledge.

Moved by the same persuasion,—of God's living union with our humanity,—I was early led, not only into abhorrence of the priestly character, but into an estimate perhaps too low of all disciplinarian methods for the administration of Churches, for the propagation of personal influence, and the voluntary management of Christian men. Unless it were possible to go right down to the seats of inmost faith, and waken the conditions of God's spirit there, a certain shame has ever haunted me at resorting to subsidiary agencies, in the wielding of which I could find no support from inward conviction. Without appeal to deep affections, no real thing seemed to be done; and with it, the fruit would secretly ripen by night and day. 'Water the roots then, and let them grow.' Such has been my thought,—perhaps also my infirmity. I am far from recommending it to others, though alone possible to me. If I have erred in this, it has been from too much trust in others, too little in myself, from belief in the spirit alive in their hearts, and misgivings of its force in my own. How it is, I know not: but in private,—to this one and to that,—I could never talk of what is holiest, without an advance of sympathy that makes the talk all needless. Is it perhaps a sign of our organic union as social men, that true reverence can never speak above a whisper, unless it be *to multitudes*;—

but *then*, can breathe its full tones, be they sorrowful or jubilant, and never doubt that they go home? O brothers all! what are we but of stammering lips and dumb, when taken one by one;—but, in communion, a chorus of solemn voices answering to the simplest sign; now mellowed to the music of humanity, now appealing to the glory of the Most High.

In the very nature of Religion, indeed, there is something which makes it difficult to reduce to the economy of *Professional administration*: and almost in proportion as the difficulty seems conquered, the essence is fled. Its inspirations, like those of Poetry and Art, lie among the free affections which, even in the most faithful mind, assert their spontaneity and evade the methods and seasons of the will. It is the perfection of the Saints and of the Saviour to be always One with God, sincere in every sanctity, and to know not what it is to be faint and blind of heart. It is the guilt of trained routine to pretend and imitate all this, and *seem* to have the draught of life ready for every thirsting tongue. It is the sorrowful strife of imperfect men,—men that *will not* be actors and *cannot* be angels,—to miss no Divine occasion when God's light and truth are real, and simulate none that shall turn them into unreality. That problem I do not profess to have solved, except only on the negative side,—to the avoidance of insincerity and pretence. My shortcomings on the other side are too close to me for fitting speech, except in humbleness before "the Great Taskmaster." This only will I say. No forbearance, human or Divine,—no patient friendship of yours, no sparing tenderness of God,—is lost upon a heart that lives on mercy and answers every trusting look.

But these lingering words must have an end. With sad affection I once more count and store the fruits of five-and-twenty years; then turn upon them the key of sacred memory, and depart. In person and in home, a life enriched with precious friendships, chastened with some holy sorrows, but darkened by no shadows of estrangement: in public

work, no associate but of like mind and genial heart, *one* loved and honoured beyond most living men, and *another* to whom it is a pure joy to leave my charge: in the Church, this fair and stately house of God, whence indeed many faithful have been called to a statelier above, but where still assembles a generation of no declining spirit; schools created for the Sunday, and vastly increased for every day, and wholesome throughout with vigorous and well-ordered work; classes for the young whose ranks were never better filled; the festival of Christian Communion warmed up by far ampler sympathies; a provision and stir of books for the studious eye, and of discussion for the inquiring mind: the traces everywhere of a people that accepts the brotherhood of Christian labour:—these are the blessings from which it might well seem to need an importunate summons of duty to call me away. Yet no outward elements of enlargement, were they ever so great, would at all answer my prayer for some vestige of benediction on these years. And far more than all beside would it be, if in that time but a few souls, one here and one there, were reborn into diviner faith and love and peace;—if, above all, I could think that any who have exchanged our communion for a better, and taken thither their ripe wisdom or their motherly self-sacrifice, or their maidenly docility, or their youthful fire, may still feel the tones they caught with us not out of tune with the higher harmonies.

And now, dear Friends, the last word must come. It is human to wish not to be forgot. Yet, believe me, to be lost from your memory and die away by the dawn of what is higher is my inmost desire. Could I fear indeed that, hereafter, heedless change and fading reverence might betray you into lower mood; that instead of taking up the beauty of this place and the affluence of your opportunities as the simple organ of expression for your own piety, you might degrade them into a mechanism for "attraction," the rhetoric of a sect canvassing the world;—that not real inner worship for yourselves, but side persuasion to others, might

here give the tone to the hours,—then it would indeed be bitter to be *thus* forgot. But for the rest, the sooner and further a greater and holier spirit snatches you away, and leaves these years enshadowed and traceless in the past, the intenser will be my joy that my work has reached its end, that I am poured out and lost on the offering of your faith, and that the sacrifice is accepted and complete. And so may the Lord perfect in you his Grace and Glory!

WORSHIP IN THE SPIRIT.

WORSHIP IN THE SPIRIT.*

MY CHRISTIAN FRIENDS,—

Now that the first blessing on this place of prayer has been sought by the voice most fit to ask it, I may descend from the height of Divine benediction to the word of human sympathy; and offer you heartfelt congratulations on the arrival of this longed-for hour. Rightly have you set apart a special day to look round devoutly on your finished work,—to silence the hammer and the saw,—to make the temple-stones listen to the voice of prayer,—and to seek upon this pavement the first meeting between man and God. To dedicate an offering like this; to register your vow that it shall accomplish its design, and its walls be kept pure from all unfaithfulness; to trim anew the flame of faith, with lamp now set upon a fairer altar; to invite afresh the Christian graces, amid forms that remind you of the "*beauty* of holiness;"—this is no light thing, and may well claim an hour of its own. As you bring your families hither this day, and still wait the exhortation of your affectionate and faithful pastor, you and he must doubtless feel, that here you reach a point of natural pause. Amid the memories that crowd into such a moment, not without a dash of human sorrow, there is one thought that puts a kind of triumph into the soul. That which draws us hither, —the common feeling of this hour, is—*a thing for ever.* While the birthdays of private life remind us chiefly of what fades away, the nativity of Churches bears witness to

* Opening of Rosslyn Hill Chapel, Hampstead, Thursday, June 5, 1862.

that which shall never pass. The Anniversaries of nature, the more they recur, are received the more with the secret sigh: but the new seasons of the Church sing themselves out in hymns of glory. The generations may perish: but between the spirit of man and the Spirit of God the relation is steady and eternal,—an asking from below, a benediction from above,—a dialogue of the secret eye between the child's lowly sorrow and the Father's infinite pity. We *renew* our houses of prayer. We, no more than our fathers, can be content to spend all our time in the field, in the street, or even by the hearth at home. There is something deeper that brings us here. It ever has been: it ever will be: and in raising a structure fit for your children's children you declare your faith, that neither the springs of salvation will ever run dry, nor will the thirst of the human soul ever cease. This continuous succession of divine want and aspiration is recognized by Christ himself in the words of John xvii. 20, 21.

> "I pray not for these alone, but for them also which shall believe in me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us."—

The Gospel of John, it has been said, presents the distinctive genius of Christianity in a less mixed form,—more completely disengaged from its Jewish antecedents, than any other of the sacred writings. And of that gospel itself the essence seems to be concentrated in the words just cited: which we may take accordingly as a condensed expression of the substance and aim of the Christian Revelation. When it is no other than the Redeemer himself who speaks;—nor only speaks, but prays;—nor only prays, but breathes the parting prayer; when in the innermost circle and on the utmost verge of his mortal life he unbosoms himself of the last secrets of his spirit;—when he is closing his account with the sorrows of the past and hinting his aspirations for the opening future of the world he leaves; that which floats to us from such a

moment must surely be the deepest pulses of his thought, and may well be received with a reverent strictness. What then is the sum of all his prayers, "not for these alone" who "had been with him in his temptations," but for disciples further on "who should believe through their word,"—for ulterior generations of his followers,—for *us* also whom Time and Providence have brought into his fold? It is *Unity:* not merely social and level unity, of one self-subsisting being with another; but dependent and uplooking, of all together with the Father and the Son:—a life lifted out of difference and conflict into the harmony of God. And as if to leave no doubt respecting the source and nature of this Unity, he identifies it with the Oneness between himself and God;—a relation which he is so far from appropriating as special to himself, that he feels he has come in vain unless it be henceforth universal among his followers. Such as had been the mutual Indwelling of the Father and the Son, such was to be the abiding experience of the faithful in every age. The union of the Divine and the Human in Christ, while unique in its perfection, is no lonely prerogative of his individual person, but belongs to him as the ideal and representative of our humanity: and, were it not a possibility and law for all our souls, its manifestation in him would be a barren wonder without significance. He is a *Revelation*, because the mists of nature, as they cleared off and set him face to face with his Inspirer, also took the veil from all our hearts, and made us aware that we are not all human, through and through, but bear the traces of "Emmanuel, God with us." His personal closeness to the Father within him, his filial intercourse, his utter self-surrender, his holy transfiguration of the natural life, would have no meaning or power for us, did it not speak to sympathetic possibilities in ourselves, and give the divine interpretation of our existence.

In this view then the blending of the Divine and Human in Christ reveals a similar blending of the two in

the constitution of our humanity. In the consciousness of this consists discipleship to him. And the life of *Communion* with the Divine Guide abiding in us;—of personal affection towards himself and trust in the leadings of his thought;—of recognition, eye to eye;—of surrender Will to Will:—this first, this last, this throughout all, is the characteristic of the Christian mind. Nowhere but in Christendom is Religion the immediate communion between the Divine and the human spirit,—the descent of God, the ascent of man, into the region of a common sympathy with the pure, the true, the good. Other faiths and philosophies have acknowledged a sacredness in the Moral Law, and claimed the sanction of Divine authority for the rules of Justice and Beneficence; but have regarded these as intimations from a distance,—a legislation put into the frame of things;—or else, a higher action of our own constitution, still leaving us in our personal isolation. It was reserved for Christ to dissipate this dim dream of God at second-hand;—to rend away the interposing veil from Conscience and holy love, and let them come to us as the glance of his living eye, the real pleading of his nature with ours. Thus disclosing the permanent Incarnation of God in our humanity, he quickened ethical relations into personal, carried us out of ourselves, turned painful struggles into loving surrender, and made perfect our natural weakness in supernatural strength. The dreadful loneliness of our nature,—the silence of the heart with its own bitterness,—is gone. The prayer of every suffering and tempted soul is answered,—"O my God, send me not out, leave me not here, to fight a sad fight, to faint and fail, alone!" The whole distinctive power of Christianity lies in this;—that it annihilates the interval between the Father of spirits and ourselves, and brings him in person into the midst of our own life; no longer putting us off with past and future belongings to him, suspended meanwhile for a period of independent experience in which we are let alone; but establishing immediate relations with

him, perpetuated through all the hours, and felt through all our secret life. Without this, Religion would never have known how to transcend Morals except by leaving them behind: nor would character ever have moulded itself into the special Christian types;—the stern strength tempered with sweet affections;—the heroism so generous and undefiant, because the expression of personal allegiance;—the inward piety, patient to pick up the crumbs of outward work;—the saintly modesty, borne by a divine pity into saddest scenes, and by her presence clearing a space of purity all round. All these may be said, in a certain sense, to do violence to nature; and they are possible only to a religion which, so to speak, takes no notice of nature, but passes straight into supernatural relation;—which sets the soul into direct dealings with her God, just as if there were no universe by, and commences the drama of eternity without admitting any time between.

To bring out more strongly this essence of our faith, we may contrast it on this side with the religions whose place it took. Paganism, in all its forms, was and ever will be *Nature-worship;* Christianity, on the other hand, is *Spirit-worship.* To the Greek, it was the outward cosmos visible around which manifested and embodied the divine eternal powers: if he were a believing Poet, the glens and streams, the rocky shores or mountain peaks of his own or his fathers' land, or the seas that rolled between, or the isles that complicated the waters, were the scenes of sacred legend, whic lifted them beyond common history and gave them a glory more than physical: if he were a Philosopher, the universal order of the heavens and the earth, the seasonal vicissitudes, the alternate pace of night and day, and all the movements of this mighty organism, showed how Eternal Mind could persuade Matter into form and beauty, and make it the seat of life. Man, in this view, had no place of his own; he was but the most eminent of natural objects, conscious of himself and of the rest; an organ of this world, seeing as well as seen: and were he not here at all, the great scheme

would scarcely miss him, but would still be all summed up in the evolution of nature and the eternity of God. To the Christian, on the other hand, the centre is entirely changed; for him, it is nature that might be taken away, if man alone were left: it is when he most forgets the world, sinks back from the colours and the images of sense, and retires into the deeps within, that he is nearest to his God: and if he would picture to himself the conditions of the most piercing consciousness of heavenly things, he launches out beyond the margin of death, into the awful spaces where nature and her warm light are left behind; and there first, where only spirits can be, feels there is no escape from divine realities. Let there be but the spirit of man in presence of the Spirit of God, and all the requisites of intercommunion are there: the world may help; the world may hinder; but in any case it is superfluous. It is direct through the higher breathings of our souls, the meek self-sacrifice, the pure aspiring, the holy trustfulness, the unswerving faith, that the Divine Guide comes to us and brings his sympathy: and this path would remain, though the moon were to grow capricious, and the sun forget to rise.

As it is the Pagan characteristic to identify God with Nature, and the Christian to identify him with Spirit; so is it the tendency of our secular life and lower faculty to keep us in the former; of the Christian Church and its higher appeals to raise us to the latter. There is doubtless truth and good in both: and it is our weakness, not our wisdom, that pushes them into contradiction with each other. I would put no slight on the study of the Physical World, or on the cultivated sense of Form and Colour, or on the native joy of a life in sympathy with the elements around. Let Science remind us that we live in a universe of Law. Let Art open it with another key, and show it as a universe of Beauty. Let ingenuity and affluence adorn our human place in it with the refinements and resources of civilized existence. Let the healthfulness of temperance, the economy of justice, the reasonableness of all the virtues and

their accordance with our social condition be shown. This is all well. But it is the Pagan side of life. And it is precisely to carry us beyond this, to bring us home from the works and ways of God to communion with himself; to make time and place and lot, and life and death, and all things, no longer able to separate us from him, that the training and worship of the Christian Church exist. Her one witness to us is, that we live where the Holy Spirit breathes and the Comforter is always near. And if ever she forgets this word, and letting divine things slip into distant times and places, talks only of secondary laws, and drops us on the mere ground of nature, she betrays her Lord. For what else did he live and die but to destroy that mid-wall of partition which keeps us at one remove from God; to interfuse the human with the divine; to lift the veil from those highest impulses and suggestions which had been taken for mere natural nobleness, and present them as God in person setting us in conscious sympathy with supernatural good? And what is the main difference between his disciple and the heroic faithful Heathen, but this; that, while both have the same Guidance showing them the better and the worse, the latter mistakes it for a Self-wisdom, the former owns it as the Spirit-light of the Holiest of all?

In truth, my friends, we spend a double life through all our years. Two worlds there are, ever spread around us; two worlds also set within. Out in the universal Space is that visible system which we call Nature, where all things are born and die,—each evanescent, but the whole enduring; —the realm of an Order silent and insensible, whose cycles are inexorable as Necessity. But Nature does not live alone, or, with all her vastness, choke up the universe of Being. Along with her reality is another that transcends it,—that is *more* than Nature,—that is *Super*natural;—a Mind, whose thoughts, whose Will, whose love, are free;—a Spirit that moveth where he listeth, and never without the fostering sympathies of eternal holiness. These two, the natural and the supernatural realms, ever co-present yet ever distinct,

make up the Whole around us. But *within* us also, in the personal experience of each they re-appear. Down in nature do we all live, in our physical appetencies, our instinctive energies, our sensitive desires :—so far as we wish to be well lodged and fed, to be rich, to be strong, to be safe, to be admired. Yet this surely is not *all*. Hovering over these natural desires, there hangs an august *Authority* which we cannot disown ;—a brooding cloud divinely watching us, and hiding either the lightnings of retribution or the gentle thunders that salute a "beloved son." That there are two wills within us, our own and another's ;—the first sinking us to the lower, the second drawing us to the higher ;—the lesser and louder comforting the self, the greater and fainter sacrificing it ;—the one tending to shut up, the other to warm and open all pure aspirings and reverential affections —who that has ever known temptation can really doubt ? And if this be not, as Scripture says, God's Spirit striving with us, I know not where else his life is to be found in us, or is at all to be distinguished from his absence or his death.

Now there may be souls so disciplined and balanced as ever to remain in the mingled presence of these two worlds. But, for the most part, even those who are most faithful to the higher guidance do not, at the moment, remember *whose* it is, and own that they are stepping upon holy ground. Great crises, indeed, there are in our experience, which, bringing us to the end of all human resource, throw us upon a Divine dependence ;—which conduct us to the very edge of Nature, and compel us to look over ;—nay, thrust us from the brink into the Infinite where the forces of the Spirit are the sole realities, and only the angels can bear us up. The desolating sweep of mortal sickness through the house, leaving its rooms to hollow echoes, in place of the tangle of merry voices ; the sudden danger, in the trackless forest or on the midnight sea, flinging the winds and spray of Eternity in our very face ; the lonely anguish of calumny and unmerited disgrace ; the surprise of betrayed affections

and disappointed trusts; the breaking of life-long ties; the fading of some last treasure from our arms; these are things which crumble the footing of nature beneath us, and open to us glimpses into the resources of a higher and less precarious world around us. These crises could, for the moment, give even to the Pagan some touch and colouring of the Christian heart. Our Christian communion has no other end than to prevent the perishing of this occasional spiritual life; to rescue its snatches of Divine light from the enveloping darkness of nature, and diffuse them as a steady and permanent consecration over our whole conscious being; to find the meaning of its indications; to interpenetrate the matter of our natural existence with the sense of supernatural relations. Christian worship perpetuates the wisdom of life's deepest crises; recognizing the solemn realities of a sphere above us, yet within us and around; owning the common affections which look up to them, the common engagement to place ourselves under their shadow or their light. If its end is to be attained, if it is to make us one with Christ and God, we must not bring to it all the mood and temper of the outer world; but, on crossing its threshold and entering here, must lay the Pagan half of us to sleep. Is it too much to ask that the spirit, so dim and drowsy in the noise and dazzle of life, should sit for a little while awake, and behold another glory? and be the reproach never to cease, "Could ye not watch with me one hour?" Enough is surely given to the play of nature in the six days' haste and heat; enough of indulgence, of competition, of spurious admirations, of stifling routine, to make atheists of us all, had we no restorative retreat. At least in the scanty hours of Christian communion, let us take the dusty sandals off, and drop the folds of blinding habit. Some little season let us give to the thirsting and reverential mind; not spreading beneath the heavens the critic's hard impervious surface, but looking up with pores open to the gracious dews and ready to burst into some verdure. I sometimes fear that the men of this generation have lost the mental attitude

of simple piety, and do not personally mingle in the strains of prayer and lose themselves in the reality of God; that their energies are so accustomed to command and conquer what is beneath them, as not readily to lie low and susceptible under what is above them; that to their free and easy complacency, master of everything, docile to nothing, there will be little that is solemn, deep and holy, till they come *to die into it.* Oh! friends, be it not so with you. Lay not on your faithful preacher's soul the intolerable suspicion, that his purest fervours come to nothing and burn out in the cold fuel of unanswering natures. Force him not to distrust his best enthusiasms. Never add yourselves on to that dead weight of natural temptation which bears down on the prophetic spirit, aud stifles the exit of God's light. Here let another spirit prevail. Let us bring into our communion, not the exacting and excepting intellect, but the waiting and kindling heart, quick to mingle its flame with the ascending fires of sacrifice. Let the prison-walls of deadening custom fall from us at the tones of prayer, and the light flow round, and the winds pass by, from the open Infinite. Once humble and genial to a spirit higher than our own, we shall find ourselves in an invisible communion, drawing us with sweet and mystic ties away from anger, care and sorrow, and making us one with each other, with Christ, with God. Of such blending worship be this the scene: and so may the place be indeed the very House of God, and none other than the Gate of Heaven!

INDUCTION CHARGE.

CHARGE TO MINISTER & CONGREGATION.*

DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,—

Among those who have heard the solemn prayer in which, through the lips of our friend, we speak this day to God, and who shall yet hear the voice in which we speak to one another, there may be some to charge us with "magnifying our office," and spending on it a measure of affection out of keeping with its feeble action on the world. And there are times, in the experience of every long-tried minister, when, with a sigh, he too would yield to such impression, and pathetically say in heart to his young successor, "Aye, dream while you can the glorious dream: soon enough you must wake to the dull light and the dripping rain." Were such a mood as this ever and anywhere possible to me, assuredly it would not be now and here. Not that, by the measures of size, there is in the history of this Church any great thing to show; but that, by the measures of depth, there are things beyond show, so real, so sacred, reaching so far towards Infinitude, as to absorb every cynic doubt that may be thrown into them. The place where I stand is perhaps the spot of all the world where I have most lived, most hoped, most loved, most suffered; have looked with truest pity on the burden of others, and best forgot my own: and how should I, with any light estimate, how but with a blessing and a prayer, introduce you, my brother, to the succession of this unutterable life? The scene around me, if nothing else,

* Rev. A. Gordon's settlement as a Pastor of Hope Street Church, Liverpool, Thursday, December 31, 1863.

must dissipate the false wisdom of age, and bring back the fervours and the trusts of better years. Around the curves of those arches a breadth of whispering wonder seems to play. The slant sunshine through the windows has painted over these walls with tender memories; and the tones of that organ re-awaken the inner music of many a thanksgiving and many a grief. The faces before me,—those that are seen in the light, those others that peer through the shadows,—ask and tell so many things with their sad and speaking eyes, that it is assuredly no trivial thing to stand here and answer and interpret. Here, then, where the very pavement is written over with the graces and sorrows of the Past; where images hover in the air, of life made beautiful and consecrate for young and old, I cannot pretend to chill any glow of hope, or lighten the solemn weight of your responsibility; and did I yield to the counsels of a cold prudence, a cloud of noble witnesses would rise from the past and contradict me.

Is it dangerous for me to speak to you of your vocation as something great and holy? Shall I foster, thus, the temper of self-exaggeration, and induce on you the airs of priestly dignity? Never, on the contrary, can we personally lie so low, as when we look up to the full height of the trust committed to us. Had we to invent for ourselves the Divine wisdom we stand here to publish, to pledge our own faculty to strike out the true light of life, to strain and stretch our natural will to the measure of a supernatural work, we should groan under a burden impossible to bear. A task the reverse of this is ours. "We preach, not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord." We are not creators, but organs, of sacred truth; we have not to originate the new, but to interpret what eternally is there; not to provide the heavenly light, but to lay the blind eye under the finger of Christ, that the scales of earthly delusion may fall; in short, to tell to the human soul what secretly it knows but faithlessly it hides away. For, if the Gospel is really of spiritual and unwasting significance, wherein, must

we say, consists our "preaching of Christ?" Is it enough that we present him in his historic individuality, and reproduce his biography for our own time?—that we make men at home in the villages of Galilee and the streets of Jerusalem, and set them to watch the domestic interior at Bethany, and lurk and listen beneath the olives of Gethsemane?—that we plant them by the Cross to see how the drama was "finished" upon earth; and then under Stephen's kindling features to hear how it was re-opened from heaven? Is it to this prophet of the Past, seen ideally across the gulf of ages, the phenomenon of an era, acting upon us by retrospective sympathy and reverence, that we look for a new birth of our humanity? Alas! if we have no other power to wield against the sins and sorrows of the world but that of a past fact, however solemn and sublime, I fear the fatal slumber will not be broken, and the bitter tears not cease to flow. Shall we then change his personality from human to divine, from historical to pre-existent, and present him as Son of God before all worlds, descending for a season into the shadows of humanity, and then emerging into eternal light again? These incidents of his being, were they ever so real, would still be past events, lying afar in history, and finding no divineness for the present hour: call it inspired manhood, or call it incarnate Godhead, it is no living fact to us, no gospel of to-day, if it belong only to one exceptional being, and was all over eighteen centuries ago. The human conscience deals with immediate problems, feels for immediate supports: human love spends itself upon the claims and sufferings that are nearest to it; and God himself cannot reach them at arm's length, or sanctify them with a look across the ages. Christ first becomes a Revelation to us, "the power of God and the wisdom of God," when he is preached, not in his solitary individuality, but as standing for our humanity for ever; taking the veil away that hid the Holy Presence there, interpreting for us the double nature of the Self that is ours and the Spirit

that is His, and finding the way of reconciliation by surrender of will and utter sacrifice. We all of us have that two-fold filiation which has been falsely fixed on him alone. Born of nature, born of God, we too must traverse the desert and meet the fiends of temptation: we have a baptism to be baptized with; and how are we straitened until it be accomplished! We have the path of self-denial to tread, and the midnight watch to meet, and the heavy cross to bear upon the dolorous way; only never alone, for the Father is with us: and passing freely into his hand to seek our own will no more, we shall not be without our moments of transfiguration and saintly communion; or the joy that deep things, hid from the wise and prudent, are revealed to the little child; or the angel of peace that strengthens for the last sacrifice. It is not the story of Jesus, not his picture, not his doctrine, that redeems us; not anything set off at a distance and taken at second-hand: all this first becomes a spiritual power when it carries us past itself into that intimate union with God which it exhibits as our true life. And so, to "preach Christ" is to take the veil from what is divine in man's experience, and bring him to the consciousness of real and living relations with the holiest of all.

Is it your desire, my brother, to find for your people this holy secret of life? You have only to find it, to believe in it, to cling to it, yourself. Would you thus "preach Christ?" The prime condition is, that you preach "not yourself"; that you lay down every personal aim, stand clear of the fetters of vanity and ambition, and, in quiet self-abandonment to the purest, truest, best that dawns upon you and claims you, rise above anxiety and fear. Remembering that self-seeking is human, self-forgetfulness divine, we know at once where the strength and the victory lie. The will that asserts itself may be potent; the will that resigns itself is omnipotent. Even the soul that is small and weak, in the child, the suffering woman, the untaught poor, becomes a marvellous power and clears an unexpected way, when

possessed with some inspiring affection, and drawn forward unconscious of wounds and weariness. And when God's spirit wields without resistance the faculties of a ripe and balanced mind, and finds in it only a loyal alacrity for every service, and freely disposes for holy ends its thought, its love, its speech, its force,—so mighty is the gospel it proclaims, that the natural organ seems glorified into the supernatural. The true, deep word, drawn from the living wells of the spirit, will go home to the human heart; and often, I believe, we meet with no response, because we dare not utter the tenderest and highest that is given us to say, and miss the ultimate simplicity. The prophet who would speak for God must not shrink, except from the impure mixtures of his own self-love; or make excuse, "Ah, Lord! I cannot speak, for I am a child." If indeed he is a child, he is the nearer heaven; and he will put his hand into the higher guidance and be led, and let his faltering lips be touched with the finger of eternal sanctity, and give forth their artless utterance.

Must you then, my brother, in order to keep near the springs of pure devotion, live the life of a recluse? Must you fear the resorts of men, lest you lose the communion of God? On the contrary, there is no place so barren as the solitary heart; and however it may stretch its dry expanse and stare up at heaven, no dew shall fall upon it, and no green thing shall appear: it is as an ashy desert, with only the show of living waters painted in its air. No, it is the law of the spiritual world that like alone can know like; and as the Father worketh everlastingly, so we must work if we are to be at one with him. The Infinite Pity looks in at our eyes, when they look out in tenderness upon another's sorrow; and the eternal beauty of holiness steals upon us when we purify the space around us by faithful service, and never rest from sacrifice while a grievance or a sin is there. The approach to God is not the lonely path of untrodden thought, but the well-worn way of love: and the more you take the yoke of burdens not your own, and

freely pledge both toil and sympathy to the sicknesses that lie near you in the great infirmary of human ills; the more patient care you bestow in opening the faith and conscience of the young, in sustaining the simple trusts of the poor, in brightening with a flush of hope and prayer the fading hours of the dying; the fresher and the fuller will be your store of wisdom from above, and the truer your vision of Him whom the pure heart shall see.

Nor will your only sphere of disinterested labour be the special world of the church and the school. Around this inner spiritual circle lies the great natural life of man, which must not be driven, by our want of sympathy, to set up for itself and break away from the restraints of reverence and the order of pure integrity. The soul of worship here will pass off as an ineffectual ghost, unless it seize and animate the organism of daily work, relieve the common duties of their secular look, and consecrate diligence, exactitude, veracity and honour. Truly to represent a Christian society in a great community like this, is to have eye and heart for all its moral relations,—industrial, municipal, and national; and bring the ready hand and thoughtful counsel and high-toned word in enforcement of social trusts and maintenance of public righteousness. Such service will readily escape the suspicion of being "professional," if rendered in the simple spirit of equal sympathy and manly duty; and kept irreproachable by the gracious temper, the modest tact, the punctual habit and precise performance, which mark a pure, unselfish and faithful mind.

In all the practical activities of your calling you will be stimulated by the expectations, and supported by the approval, of the society you serve; and the difficulties will come rather from within than from without. There is another, in one sense an opposite, phase of your proper functions, in which you must expect to feel yourself alone, and which you must sacredly guard from the importunity of external affairs. Though the Christian religion is not a

philosophy but a life, yet life also has its intellectual side, and ferments with the movement of thought, as well as the stir of work; and meditative minds that can feel their way to its confines find it embosomed in the infinite every way, and running out into wonder in all its radii. Is Faith to be outstripped and left behind in those silent and solemn fields of speculation? Must all sanctity and tenderness and trust stop short, and lie down in faintness on the last dust of the noisy present? No! wherever thought can go, panting and struggling for another step, religion can draw a quiet breath, and spread a light of safety and sweetness on the way. God is there, as well as here; and those who speak for him must neither be struck dumb as in a foreign world, nor utter rash and inconsiderate things. There may have been times when the fervent spirit alone, without much culture of mind, was adequate to every need of the Church; but in our age the prophet of power must be the theologian too. For the hour, no doubt, a station here and a station there may be well served by men of devoted heart, of energetic will, and narrow mental horizon. But if we indulge in intellectual unfaithfulness and permit sacred learning to become a tradition; if even for a single generation there shall be none among us in easy command of the highest problems that agitate men's minds, none to sustain the living links of historic reverence that join the present with the past, none competent to clear the imperishable spirit from the transitory forms of holy writ; if we leave all rich intellect and scholarly accomplishment outside, and then try to speak to them from our lower level; who does not see the inevitable issue? The affections themselves cannot long co-exist with stagnant intelligence; and cold as may seem the winds that stir the waters of thought, they are needed to quicken the pulses of the heart, flush the cheek with love, and brace the will to act. And then how much of the best inward life of all Christians depends upon books. Drain away the sources of a permanent and satisfying literature, cut off from the future its Locke and

Lardner, its Taylor and Wellbeloved, its Priestley and Channing, and do you think that, for a religion so starved there would be any history at all? Take the volumes from its shelves, blot out the dear and venerable names that are the symbols of its wisdom and piety; and what Church could live? They are the silent preachers that reach the furthest onward, and find the deepest in all time. You, my brother, have prepared yourself by conscientious culture to keep watch over the intellectual conditions, as well as the practical manifestations, of faith and piety, and to help the efforts of the lame and halt in thought. Reverence your gift as a sacred trust: preserve it from waste; and, by a scrupulous economy of time, never cease to enlarge it. Even for your highest spiritual life, often severely tried by the feverish sorrows and humbling sins of the immediate world, the aliment of thought supplied by the genius and wisdom of the past is little less than indispensable. Keep then in close communion with the mighty spirits who, in reason, in sanctity, in love, stand nearer to God than we: rise habitually to the scope of their horizon: breathe, and bring down to us, their higher air: and prepare yourself, your people, and your generation, to migrate to their living presence, when the veil shall be withdrawn which separates them from time and us from eternity.

And just in this connexion stands the only word of counsel, which I would venture to address to you, my friends, who have committed a share of so sacred a charge to these young hands. You ask him to draw for you from the springs of salvation. Encourage him then to seek, in pious and tranquil solitude, their fountain head; to retire for a few hours, day by day, from the turmoil of practical affairs and scattering engagements, to those studious and contemplative heights where the soul renews her power, and the life of God mingles again with the wasted and wearied heart of man. Reverence in him the needs of that spirit, the claims of that mind, whither your own is to resort for refreshment; and beware of bringing the sweet-flowing waters of the young

soul to stagnation, by turning them all to the uses of practical life and the working of even the best enterprises. Without a due mingling of the inner and the outer life, the wasting of the one cannot fail to lower the energies of the other.

By a happy balance, almost too rich in opportunity, you have placed beside your Paul, the tried and well-beloved, a Timothy, whose own inheritance of excellent gifts and "faith unfeigned," has been improved by faithful culture. There will be room for them both in your hearts: and the more absolute your trust in the apostolic wisdom and affection of the elder, the freer will you be to love without timid reserves whatever is pure and noble in the inspirations of the younger. Let none, then, no, not even the most sagacious and strong, "despise his youth." It is inevitable, and it is right, that you should have the advantage over him in *one* world,—the world of natural experience; but it may well be that in *the other* (and surely you will say, the higher), he may be more deeply versed than you. In the apprehension of divine things, years are not always gain; nor are the skilled adepts in the outward life necessarily the best interpreters of the deeper mysteries of human experience. When God needed a seat for his highest inspiration, he chose the soul of One not thirty years of age. And, of all that were with Jesus in his temptations, they say it was the youngest that he loved the most. Be not then slow to believe that heaven may send a word of wisdom without length of days. From the very freshness of an unworn spirit expect rather a re-juvenescence of your own piety, a re-kindling of noble enthusiasms that have faded from you in the world. Or, should this hope be dismissed with a sigh, at least permit your children to catch the congenial fire, and be purer and devouter than their fathers.

Above all, my friends, if you would have the best mind and heart of your ministers, and would live out of what is deepest in your own, fling yourselves freely into the true spirit of this place,—the ancient spirit of Christian worship.

Crossing this threshold, quit the hard lines and cutting shadows of too critical a thought: break away from the dry egotistic light that withers everything and illuminates nothing: pass into the "bright cloud" that overshadows all divine communion, and melts the souls of multitudes into one, with a transfiguring glory. The Church is the appointed check on that *divisive* individuality which keeps heart from heart, and shuts up each in his own separate cell: and here, in face of the beauty, the sorrow, the mystery of life, we are all one, looking up into the pure eyes of the Infinite, and stretching forth the hand to touch but the hem of the all-healing robe. But of that heavenly glance and thrill we can see nothing, feel nothing, unless we step down from our lonely pedestals of personality, and stand on the broad platform of our common trusts and simplest affections; and be content to abide there and be at peace. The Christian Church has dared to become the organ of the universal secrets of the human soul; to say *aloud* with the 'Amen' of multitudes, what private natures were afraid to breathe; to say *for ever*, in immemorial words, what else no hour would confess in its common speech. Her method may seem strange to the ever-hasting genius of our age, She calls us together to crowd her pavement, and then delivers to us, and bids us take up, not the new and dazzling, but the oldest utterances of our nature. And is there not wisdom in this simplicity? Thought and ingenuity, the vivid play of intellectual life, may sustain themselves by movement, and ever fly the Past. But the love and faith, the unwearied pity and sorrowful reverence of the human heart, grow by their patient restfulness, and return with a pathetic thirst to their own most ancient thoughts and words. The passionate lament of Hebrew prophets, the glorious joy of a Christian apostle, the penitential sigh, the solemn prayer, the sweet submission, once the private breathing of an Augustine, a Gregory, a Fenelon, wake the echoes of a thousand souls, and so swell and deepen from age to age, as to become at last the church-music of our humanity. This

it is that gives their power to the simplest words of holy writ, and to those old elements of worship which come to us charged with devotion saintlier than ours: this it is that makes their quiet tones so dignified and humane. They lift us from the feverish present, and throw around us the solemn shadow of a now silent time. They link us with an earlier communion on earth and a higher in heaven; and bid us rise to the sympathy of that high kindred. Give your glad answer to this glorious call. Entering here, genially take your human place. Leave it not doubtful whether you are touched with the pity, and bend beneath the burden which others own. Burst the bonds of your critical or passive mood: give free wing to affections that have had, perchance, too long repose; and join the chorus of humility and aspiration. Reaching the very soul of union in these deepest seats, and chastening individual varieties by the recurring touch of an absorbing devotion, ministers and people will be fresh and strong for every work of righteousness, and be found in the field of moral conflict wherever truth and goodness need a rescue, and cowards fly, and heroes fall. Go forth then, armed with this spirit, and fear no hosts of evil: and, under leaders combining a rare wisdom of experience with the forces of unexhausted youth, claim your share in the victories of Right and the Kingdom of our God.

THE GOD OF THE LIVING.

TO THE REVERENDS

M. MARTIN PASCHOUD,

WHOSE PRESENCE HONOURED THE OCCASION OF ITS DELIVERY,

AND

M. ATHANASE COQUEREL, FILS,

WHOSE ABSENCE ALONE EXCUSED ITS DELIVERY,

THE ENLIGHTENED REPRESENTATIVES OF A FREE AND SPIRITUAL CHRISTIANITY IN THE REFORMED CHURCH OF FRANCE,

THIS DISCOURSE IS DEDICATED,

IN PROFOUND SYMPATHY WITH THEIR AIMS,

AND ADMIRATION OF THEIR SPIRIT.

THE GOD OF THE LIVING.*

"God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."—MATT. xxii. 32.

THESE words, as they come from the lips of Christ, are made to bear a mighty burthen. They are used to show that, for those who once stand in conscious relation to God, there is no death; that whom he owns, he owns for ever; that the contact of his name is immortality. Whether from a premiss which looks so slight so glorious a conclusion can legitimately emerge, I do not mean at present to inquire. The rule certainly implies that, while all creatures die who have no faculty for God, the mind which can know and worship him transcends the mortal limits, and is drawn into the kindred of eternal life;—a rule not less compatible, I venture to believe, with the deepest philosophy than with the purest piety. Be that however as it may, I turn the rule to-day to different account. I use it as a witness to the innermost thought of Christ; that Divine relations are *living* relations; that they are not among things historical that have been and are not, but pertain to souls now upon the stage; that wherever the struggle of moral life is fresh and strong, and a new generation joins the fight, there is the field and fervour of God's spirit; that if there be anything dead, he quits it for the throbbing griefs and rising aspirations of to-day. His presence with our human world is not like the universal space that folds it round, but as the passing wind that,

* Opening of Oakfield Road Church, Clifton, November 10, 1864.

season by season, unbinds the streams and starts the verdure. Not that the old memorials of him are other than sacred too. In the Past also he dwelt, *when it was Present:* but of *that* only secondary vestiges remain, while the first-hand Reality is *here.* Nor do the elder voices of the Spirit speak articulately save to the ear which is open to the new: and one who is utterly incredulous of Divine communion with humanity now, who would be as much astonished at a manifestation of God's will to-day as if Socrates were to appear in our streets, for whom the heavenly word stands only on the shelf of ancient literature, can never interpret the holy records of the past. In this great saying,—"God is the God of the living,"—Jesus seems to be thinking aloud, and we overhear the very essence of his religion: and a Church that is to speak for him and bear his name must dedicate its pavement as a place of *immediate* meeting, without even himself between, of the human spirit with the Divine. When he himself came just for this very end, to leave us alone with God, and retired to make the audience more solemn, it were a poor thing for us to call him back in frustration of his own work, instead of yielding to his faith, living his life, and praying his prayer. He framed himself, —and so must we,—on the one grand truth which he found in the oldest Scripture and in the newest sorrow of the hour, viz., that God is the "*living* God"; whom we mock if we think him absent "on a journey, or peradventure sleeping and not at present to be awakened"; that his abode is with men, whose spirits are the tabernacle of his, and whose history beats with the pulses of his thought; that he is for ever here with whispered counsel, for ever acting with holy will beneath our wildest force. His life with us is the one perpetual reality to which the entire series of sacred oracles, —law and annals, psalm and prophecy, gospel and epistle, nay, the insight of wise heathens and the consciousness of good Christians, are a protracted witness. Variously mingled, at times almost quenched, in the shadows of our lower humanity, his light has never, it may be, save in one

Son of Man, cleared itself of every mist, and transfigured our nature to its proper glory: but still, this Headship of Christ is Membership to us, and makes us one with him as partakers of the same Spirit. Floodtide or neap, it is the same deep that flows: and whether you open to it the winding recesses of private life, or the broad gulf that separates the continents and determines the curvature of history, the awful wave sweeps in.

This life of God in the soul of man and in the courses of the world cannot be deeply realized, without ennobling our whole conception of Revelation, and importing a prophetic sanctity into the experiences of to-day. The great apostacy of modern Christendom is that it believes the witness instead of Him that is witnessed, and while settling abstract truth ceases to lean on the only True. We think of him as we do of the *departed* spirits of our race, rather than as of the very friend whose hand is in ours and whose eye gleams into the chamber of our heart. We half fancy that he shut himself up when the canon of Scripture was closed, and remained quiescent for ages not yet spent. And, strange to say, the higher our theological pretensions, the more is our belief apt to consist of negations and exclusions of God, blind to his Spirit in every realm save one. To magnify his old inspirations, we deny the new: to narrow him to the preternatural, we empty the natural Cosmos of his will: to seek him in the superhuman, we forget his life in our humanity, and cease to meet and trust him in our love and faith and truth: to vindicate his presence with the Hebrew race, we treat the Greek as simply undivine. Once surrender yourself to the sense of God's infinite and eternal life, and these limitations must fall away. You will find it impossible to make for him any enclosure of time or space or history that shall be exceptionally his. You will divide between the holy and the unholy, not by date or by geography, but by the boundary that is nowhere absent and that never fades,—between good and evil, love and hate, true and false, sacrifice and selfishness. You will hold,

with the Catholic, that his inspiration is not gone, but has its shrines of perpetuity in this world. You will feel, with the Puritan, that his hand is in the event, his call in the duty, his counsel in the high spirit, of the hour. You will see the very matter and substance of your experience glow with an inner light beyond its own, and draw to it a bright cloud of transfiguration. You will keep, in short, the ancient reverences, but without the modern scorns; and lie open, with humble and docile mind, to the leadings of a Holy Spirit that still abides to teach and comfort us.

Are we thus betrayed into any disparagement of "historical revelation?" What is "historical revelation?" It is not a revelation of which we have a finished history; but a revelation of God through human history; therefore with foci, it may be, of intensest light, but with curve wide as the sweep and continuous as the lines of our humanity. And the reason why its aspect and configuration must ever change is this;—that two factors go to shape it, of which one is constant, the other variable. A living religion is the *passing of God over the heart of man*, to touch the secrets ready to awake there, and let in such dawn as will not blind the tender eye. He and his truth are, no doubt, eternally the same: but our nature, on which they breathe, is ever spreading a different climate beneath them. And just as the nourishing wind and dews may bring upon the rocks of one latitude nothing but the lichen and the moss, yet cover the soil of another with the balsam and the palm; so will the same Divine Spirit ever ripen the seeds within us whose conditions are ready; educing here the scanty verdure of barbarous life that yet redeems it from sterility, and there the fruits of richest culture and forests of deepest root. But in every region he has hid within the soul *some* possibilities of good; and in every age he is there to cherish and quicken them into realization. And wherever we find an incipient reverence for right, or a free sacrifice of love, or a sigh after unseen beauty,—be it in Jew or Gentile, barbarian or Greek,—there we are on the traces of his work,

and the skirts of his Shekinah are floating by. *Good* everywhere and in all its forms is not only loved and welcomed by him, when it *contrives to appear;* but is helped by him in its inextinguishable *struggle to appear*, and pushes itself forward by the inner tension of his Spirit. They that simply feel within them the pressure of the good, and do not know it to be His,—that are borne along by a secret sense of honour, or passion for justice, or surrendered to disinterested love,—are his unconscious organs, and serve One who remains behind the veil. And just the *taking away of this veil* is what we mean by "*Revelation:*" which consists therefore in discovering the *Personal ground* of whatever we revere; in seeing, through the duty that awes us, and the good that haunts us, the very look of God; —in changing our worship from a blind service of we know not what, into an unsealed affection, eye to eye,—therefore from poetry to prayer, from moral resolve to holy trust, from weary labour to a joyous sacrament.

If this be the essence of Revelation, this unfolding of God's living personality where it was undiscerned before, this recognition of him in the disguises of our highest experience,—it is not only conceivable, it is inevitable, that revelation should be progressive and indefinitely open. He must be rediscovered in every new good and every grander truth that dawns: and fast as the just admirations and private reverences of men change into fresh forms, and the tastes and truths of a lower age enrich themselves into those of a higher, is the vesture glorified through which he gleams. The Divine life to-day is ever in the best spirit of the young and growing time; and thither will a living piety that loves his past resort to own his present work, and find what new chord may be flung in to swell the ancient hymn. Wonder, love and faith, haunted with the perpetuity of God, cannot linger on the trodden road, and stay their quest among the fresh fields where he leads our immediate feet, any more than the lips of thirst can be moistened with remembrance of the draught of yesterday. The spring of salvation has an

everlasting flow: and it were a weary thing to sit through the noonday heats at the fathers' well, were not the running waters heard beneath. From God's elder inspirations let nothing be detracted: the more we know of them, the deeper and sublimer will they seem. But, be assured, they have never gone to sleep, and left us to a lull of hopeless desertion. Quote them not against the breathing of his Spirit, passing where it listeth now. Open a genial heart to them; and the more they possess you, the less will you dream that they have ever ceased, and the more susceptible will you be to their prolonged pulsation. The word of God peals through the whole life of our humanity; once only, in holy sorrow, pouring out a melody entirely divine: but never without its notes of sacredness, as if its anthem were shut up; and from age to age opening, as it were, new organ-stops within our nature, not simply to repeat, but to vary, to redouble, to refresh the strain.

Not only is God's *immediate and personal* mingling with the currents of our being inconsistent with a mere stationary and traditional apprehension of divine things; but even his revelation through a Mediator involves in itself a principle and process of growth. Christ is a real person, his life on earth and even in heaven historical; his spirit and characteristic words are known facts, not shifting fictions. But *what* and *how much* men are able to see of a reality, even when closest to them, depends not more upon its nature than upon their eye. They perceive what their faculty is open to take in, and miss the rest; just as of two Artists gazing on a gleamy sea, one will interpret the water, the other the air and light. And the greater and richer the reality is, the less will our apprehension be equal to it, and the more broken our view of it. God alone can comprehend God; and it would take a second Christ to know the first. But that which is unattainable at once by a single eye may be accomplished in succession by many; and as, one by one, the many-souled disciples come up with reverent gaze, feature after feature, expression after expression, is

brought out, till the harmony of perfection is completed. Nor is this all. The partial vision which each one carries away is precisely that which stirs him most; it is as a seed dropped in the furrows of a congenial soil; and when it has done its reproductive work that single grace has grown a harvest, visibly waving over the field of the world: and thenceforth that type of God's spiritual husbandry is secured from perishing. Thus from the person of Christ, distributing its meanings among the sympathetic aptitudes of men, do whole histories arise,—lines of thought running into new latitudes, and blossoming affections trying unexpected heights, and raising the rose upon the snow. What are these successive experiments of his power on our nature but a growth and development of the revelation in him? And who can deny that they aid and enrich our conception even of himself? Not till we see his characteristics realized on the large scale of history, does our coarse eye fully dare to pronounce that they are his. But our foolish doubt, whether the little mustard-seed of the heavenly kingdom is perhaps a dead grain of grit or wood, cannot last when the herb is grown and the branches wave. A light is therefore reflected back from the experience of Christendom upon the life and individuality of Christ; and the full significance of God's revelation in him is found in the consciousness not of the first age, but of the last.

In short, ever since the Advent, the divine image of the Son of God has been going its rounds through the chambers of our sleeping humanity; flashing on the eyelids ready to be lifted at its approach, and mingling with the dreams of those whose hour was not yet come. First, he woke up the three forms of mind that are represented by Matthew, Paul and John, and have ever since continued separate under the names of Law and Faith and Love, and perhaps only in heaven will blend in one. Each of these, "when it was awake, beheld his glory"; yet to each did it seem different; and each, working out its own view, opened a distinct vein of treasure in the faith, and left it other and

richer than before. Nor is it only within the limits of the first age, and in immediate contact with the historical person of Christ, that this variety of spiritual expansion, this deepening of the soul in particular directions, may be traced. Almost every generation of the Church has borne not only repeated fruits, but new; each prior season dropping its foliage of influence, and so changing the very soil, and putting a different sap and nutriment into the burst of the next Spring. And now and then the power of Christ strikes upon some deeper and grander soul, and throws out startling results;—schemes of thought, fairly evolved, yet of which there had been but faint surmise;—musings of meditation, floating on the very breath of the old Christian love, yet fresh to the world as morning air; creations of Art, true to the very essence of Christian worship, and only giving shape and colour to its grace and majesty, yet native to quite another clime from that of Apostles and Evangelists. Every great thinker, penetrated with deep conversion, changes the religion that ferments within him, flings it out in expanded form, and leaves it other than he found it. Athanasius and Augustine and Pelagius; Anselm and Abelard; Luther and Calvin and Socinus;—have all impressed upon the Faith lineaments it did not contain before. The writers of the Latin hymns; the builders of the Western minsters; the composers of the Liturgies that bore the burden of contrition and aspiration from age to age; the authors of the anthems so plaintive in sorrow or jubilant with holy joy; the painters of sacred story; the poets of spiritual insight; the reformers of corrupted truth;—all have contributed their element to the glory and affluence of the faith, and have freely thrown their contribution of light, of thought, of music, or of fire, into the sacrifice in which our worship flames to Heaven. Nay, we too in our time, the humblest of us that will become an organ for the fruitful life of God's Spirit, and say a true distinctive word, or do a genuine and loving deed,—may add to the growing heritage of the Church. That

the thought we think and the prayer we breathe is the last term of Christian communion between God and our humanity, we do not for a moment presume to say:—enough, that it is the deposit committed to us, the temple-tribute which, mite though it be, is all that we have. As we freely cast it into the treasury of heaven, we would in no wise disparage other, be they earlier or be they later, gifts. This new Church we enter on the roll and register of an expanding Christendom, progressive in its thought, persistent in its pieties: and under its shelter we stand ready to believe whatever comes true, to pity whatever is sorrowful, to revere whatever is divine. We dedicate it as a Sanctuary for that immediate and conscious meeting of the Living God with living men, which Christ has made a reality for ever; and which, though its speech may be in many dialects, is the outpouring of a common inspiration, and brings from the Infinite Compassion the answer of a common blessing. If, in accepting the position which Jesus has opened to us, of direct relation, face to face, with the Father of Spirits, we seem to stand alone,—apart from those who put not only a Past but a Present Mediator between,—we feel assured, in spite of doctrinal decrees, that the outer separation is less than the inner sympathy: the one is on the human surface, the other in the hiding-place of God. The confession which we bring, and the repose which we find, are the same that are everywhere familiar to the heart of Christendom: only with us they seem to go and come straightway in primary converse with the Soul of souls; while others fear that, without interceding agency, they must miss their way. Be the pathway simple or circuitous, the substance of the worship is the same. It is no mere private want, no fancy of ours to-day, that we come here to breathe; but the trusts of eighteen centuries and the sighs and hopes of more,—nay, the perpetual plaint and prayer of our humanity. The communion longed for by ancient wisdom, entered by Christian simplicity, enriched by the sanctities and sufferings of fifty

generations, and charged with pathetic memories from all, is that to which we dedicate this house. Every great and good mind that has lived in this communion has given it a new meaning and lifted it to higher consecration; has put a fresh tone into his speech, and set on its saintly countenance another lineament of grace. Into the worship that brings us here has flowed the passion of Tertullian, the severity of Ambrose, the self-denial of St. Francis, the sweetness of Tauler, the nobleness of Milton, and the fervours of countless holy men. Their solemn shadows lie around us here: their tender and majestic voices steal into the chorus of our hymn; and may well help the song of our hearts towards the height of their diviner strain,—"Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are all thy ways, O Thou King of Saints!"

THE THREE STAGES OF UNITARIAN THEOLOGY.

THE THREE STAGES OF UNITARIAN THEOLOGY. *

" Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer; thy Name is from everlasting."—ISAIAH lxiii. 16.

THE true prophetic heart, may we not say, breathes through these words, and gives them a music that can never die away. They are the tones of a spirit tender, yet clear and strong; reverent in memory, open to love, warm with the humanities, yet driven from the sunny front of life, and in its retreat falling back on the sheltering loneliness of God. And do they speak for the Hebrew poet alone? Rather do they pitch the note of a perpetual hymn, caught up and delivered on, age after age, by the noblest voices of history. In the education of our race it is inevitable that the children should outgrow the father's house, and emigrate to new lands of thought; and could the men of old come back among us, and look at us with their patriarchal eyes, who knows but that we might ask their blessing in vain, and Abraham perchance would be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not? To hard and driving natures, content to start the world afresh with each generation, this may seem a mere sentimental grief. But the really progressive minds, that appear to run furthest from the past, are most conscious of their debt to it, most tinctured by its inner life, and most love its venerable

* Anniversary of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, May 19, 1869. Unity Church, Islington.

names; and for them to be treated as outcasts from the family of the faithful, and find themselves exiles from the communion to which they cling, is a lot more pathetic than stripes and bonds. A divine necessity, however, is laid on them to bear it. They cannot linger in semblances: they cannot tamper with words: they cannot look away from the light, and play it off in tricks of artificial refraction: they cannot breathe the air of half-truth and half-pretence which maintains the sluggish pulses of the world, but must pant aloft into the untainted elements of life: and as this thirst for the pure reality, this sensitiveness to the poison of falsehood, this inability to worship except in absolute simplicity of spirit, must needs take them apart from the level of human sympathy, and often leave the tenderest affections the most alone, what remains but that they fling themselves from the last brink of earthly reliance, and in a passion of infinite trust cast themselves upon the only True, and cry, "Thou, Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer; thy Name is everlasting."

No Reformers have been more unconditionally thrown upon this sublime trust than those whose work we celebrate and prolong this day. As if to justify their own protest against the Trinitarian theology, and prove for them how it darkened human affections, they have been treated as aliens from the sacred commonwealth; and because they would not, at Athanasius's bidding, worship they knew not what, but, abiding by the religion of Christ, would pray only as he prayed, and own no more than his two great commandments, and know no blessing but his beatitudes, they have been thrust outside the walls of the "City of God," and told that the Fathers of the faithful are ignorant of them, and the Christian Israel acknowledges them not. Be it so: these chartered believers may shut up themselves, but cannot enclose our God: without, as well as within, He lives; and, as the gates close behind us, and we go into the open and solitary place, where the cathedral bells are lost and the litanies are heard no more, newer voices of his Spirit may perhaps float to us on the silence, and we may

grow into larger apprehension by simply being alone with him. That there really has been a natural expansion and enrichment of Unitarian theology, favoured by the very banishment into which it has been driven, will appear from a mere glance at the successive stages of its modern history.

Religion, even in its most intellectual forms, can never entirely lose its symbolical character; and the real interest of its doctrines will usually be found far behind the apparent. Had the question respecting the person of Christ concerned merely the composition of an historical individual, human or superhuman, it could never have stirred so intense a passion, and tracked its way through Christendom with such a line of storm. The secret of the strife lies deeper. He stands in it not for himself, but for mankind; and the doubt, whether within that meek and suffering form the Divine essence is hid, truly means, to those who shrink from it, whether, for us too, any divine life is possible, and the Father of spirits will take up his abode with us. It is not the Jesus of the biographers, but the ideal of our spiritual humanity, the type and head of our race in its heavenly relations, whose seamless robe has been torn by the rude hands of controversy; and were it not that his problem and ours were bound up together, that his divineness was the assumed measure of our communion with God, and that what was asked about him was answered about us, the inquiry must have tired itself out in traversing the ages. But the mind returns with unexhausted wonder to the questions, "What are we?" "Where do we stand in the hierarchy of being?" "Do we belong only to Nature beneath us, or can we live in love with God above us?" and, under the disguise of a *Christology*, these *human* issues have ever been upon their trial, and, to those whose ears are open, have mingled with the voices of angry disputants an undertone, not of softening piety alone, but of unsuspected sympathy.

The doctrine of the Trinity is an economy for linking together the Human nature and the Divine; for snatching

man, as an exception, from the general physiology of the world, where he would only, like the cattle, be a creature of the universal Maker; for recognizing his Sonship and Divine similitude, as an eternal reality, whether known to himself or unknown, whether reserved in heaven or become historical on earth; and for bringing out his implicit consciousness of this, in the whispered pleadings of a Spirit supreme above his own. God in the Universe, God in History, God in the personal Soul,—these three are separately recognized, yet blended into one, in the formula against which we protest; and in dissolving that formula, we may be thought to hazard the balance of these relations, and to insulate ourselves on some hard and narrow unity. Our simpler conception, it is affirmed, is visibly inadequate both to the fulness of the Divine perfection and the depth of human experience, and repels the richer and riper souls of Christendom by the Mahomedan baldness of its piety, and the Stoical evenness of its human ideal. Above all, we are assured, do we fail to provide the needful mediation between heaven and earth. The Christ of the creeds, being *both* God and man, can bring the two natures into harmony. The Christ of the Arians, being *neither God* nor man, is cut off from both, and cannot blend them in accord. The Christ of the Unitarians, being *wholly* man, carries in himself the alienated nature, and lies under the disqualification he is needed to remove. He may be an *example* upon the human level, but cannot, it is said, lift us to the Divine. Without denying either all that is claimed for the Trinitarian scheme or all that is charged on our own, we shall find something to countervail the merits of the former, and to repair the defects of the latter, in the growth of our theology during the last century.

The strength of the Unitarian faith lies in the very first position which it seized, and which I hold to be the impregnable centre of all true religious and moral theory,—that, for all spiritual natures, *Unity* and *Personality* are One. That which distinguishes you from another, and holds you

to your identity from day to day, is the permanent Self-consciousness which the stream of varying thoughts touches as it flows, and the continuous Will which issues or permits the most opposite activities. These are the highest and characteristic attributes of our being; and by its highest attributes must every nature be measured, and in them must its essence be found. Suppose them to change: let a fever obliterate your memory of the past, or establish within you a double and alternate consciousness, unrelated as your dreaming to your day; and we could no more call to account this fluctuating Self than we could punish John for Peter's lie. The moral identity once broken, all other continuity goes for nothing; all other sameness is illusory. What boots it that you are still as tall, as strong, as swift as you were before; that your friends recognize your photograph and your voice; that your pulse has not altered its speed, nor your brain its size? your being has fallen into fragments which these threads are ineffectual to blend. This rule of thought is our only guide when we pass to things Divine; and it compels us to say that, if God be not One *Person*, he is not One at all: whatever else remains, when you have multiplied the *Personal* centres of thought and will, is lower than these, and any Unity it may have is of no interest to us; for whom *nothing Impersonal can ever be Divine.* The Godhead, if by that you mean the Supreme Object of our worship and our trust, subsists not in any spiritual substance within whose compass separate Personalities may have their presence and unfold their celestial drama; but in the living seats of Infinite Mind and perfect holiness: a plurality of these is a plurality of Gods; and if you try to integrate them again by a common relation to some impersonal essence, you do but deify the lower after taking away the unity from the higher.

I know it will be said that the old creeds meant something less by the word "Person" than it suggests to us, and intended only to mark three distinct parts which the Divine nature plays relatively to the universe and to us.

However true the explanation, it leaves the thing explained worse than it was before; for if the Personal attributes, as we understand them, are absent from the members of the triad, where are they to be found? *Who* thinks the divine thoughts? *who* wills the divine acts? whither am I to fly for the Living Mind that answers to my own, Spirit to spirit? If these characteristics are disclaimed for the *personal* elements of the scheme, it is surely vain to seek them in the *non*-personal; and they must simply be without determinate place in it *anywhere*, and float unfixed in the spaces of the Divine Infinitude. And this is the simple truth: the language of the creeds is born of an ancient Pantheistic philosophy, which blurred all the lines between Thinker and Thought, between God and the World, between Spontaneity and Will, and never gained the complete conception of *Personality*, human or divine. This great and prolific idea, approached but not secured by Judaism, is the healthy product of modern times, the chief gain of our speculative intellect, and inspirer of our practical life; and a religion which does not provide for it,—which, instead of borrowing anything from its light and power, only blinks at them and eludes them, and escapes under cover of the Greek ambrosial cloud, half-radiance, half-mist, confesses itself unequal to the wants of living humanity. The first essential then of a restored purity of worship was precisely the work to which our predecessors in the last century addressed themselves:—to clear the Personality of God, till it is simple as the unity of the soul: to sweep away the haze of ancient Pantheism, with the ecclesiastical mythology it holds: to take the eternal Son of God from heaven, and isolate the Father, as the One Infinite Mind, the Sole Self-subsisting Life, the all-pervading Will, at whose disposal creation lies.

The first effect of this absolute loneliness of God inevitably was to exhibit the universe as a stupendous centralized monarchy, administered on one plan, and directed by one power. The provinces of the Cosmos can

thus have, as it were, no municipal life; the local agents no real independence: the whole hierarchy of place and rank is but the receptacle and organ of a force given and transmitted: there can be no pause for remonstrance, no idea of resistance: the single impulse from the capital moves on its inexorable lines, and executes its errand at every station as it flies. Priestley's Necessarian type of doctrine was the natural result of his reduction of all causes to One, and his intense absorption in that One. When you plant yourself in thought at the Divine station, and look out thence through the universal fields, and take the clue now of this law, now of that, to conduct you through the maze of phenomena, the whole system, reduced to miniature at that height, must appear as one, with man as a minor organism swept along in its current of force; its scientific program will construct itself within your imagination, filling up its vacancies as the prospect clears; till the whole appears to you as a mighty machine of divine invention, the vehicle of predetermined methods, and the depository of predetermined ends. So long as the Unity of the Divine agency was in question, and was threatened with the partnership of coequal powers, this Religion of Causation, which indignantly expelled all "fellow-workers" and all withstanders of the Most High, met the wants of the time, and fostered a sublime and comprehensive piety. You pass through an experience at once subduing and exalting, when you part from all realities but the Supreme, and find yourself with Him alone; when the throng of secondary causes ceases to distract and to conflict, and, as it sinks into semblance, drops into the lines of an eternal order; when you try to empty the running waters and the sweeping winds and the teeming earth of any forces of their own, and bid them speak and look for Him alone; when the passions of men rise up against you, and you stand still and answer not, because they subside before your eye into a pulsation of His will; when the very thoughts you seem to think resolve themselves

before you into phenomena of His life passing a conscious point of space; when, in short, life becomes to you a sacred dream, and history a soliloquy of God, and the possibility is gone of anything less than the Divine. As if to test at once the sustaining efficacy of this faith, its great apostle in the last century was driven, the victim of ruinous outrage, from the country he had instructed and adorned; and never did it receive more impressive comment than in the lofty patience, and serene trust, the unexhausted benevolence, of the exile of Pennsylvania.

In vindicating the Sovereignty of the universal Father, this scheme subordinates the whole universe alike, and allows nothing to approach nearer to him than the web to him that weaves it: the threads may be of this colour or of that, in the warp or in the woof; but all are interwoven in the same texture, and hold a homogeneous relation to the Maker. Man, therefore, is not less exclusively a part of nature, than the birds and the plants; is worked up in the same way into the organism of the world; and though he may have a larger consciousness, containing within itself more successive links in the chain of production, is equally the theatre of their predetermined order, and powerless to give them an alternative direction. He too, like all else, is as the clay to the potter, to be moulded by another; and be the pressure on the inside or on the out, he is shaped and does not shape himself. Since he is sensitive, and can be turned hither and thither by the touch of pleasure and of pain, he is *manageable* and may be broken in; but, since he cannot help going whither the given impulses take him, he is not *responsible*. The treatment of him may be *disciplinary*, but cannot be *moral*; you may pity him, but cannot blame him; and he may feel regret, but never compunction. If this is his aspect in the human view, still more must it be in the Divine: how can God, who meant him to be exactly what he is, call him to account, or look on him with less complacency than if he had been different? And so, the moral sentiments which are superseded on earth

disappear from heaven: and He, whose name was once "Righteous," and "Holy," merges all his perfections in "benevolence." Nor does there seem room, upon this scheme, for any *personal* relations between us and God, whether of *similitude* or of *communion*. For that which constitutes him a *Personal* Being is precisely that Free originating power of which we have none, and which, centred all in his nature, leaves him the only *Person* in the universe, and us but a complicated sort of *things*. In the only attribute which gives him *character*, we can never be like him: and we have no independent standing-place from which we may speak with him, face to face: no private closet where we can enter and shut the door; if we kneel down, it is on his prompting ground: if we sigh, it is his breathing: if we pray, the words move the wrong way, and flow from him, not to him: He possesses us behind and before: and turn, and look, and implore and weep as we may, it is still his own drama under masquerade. From this theory, it is plain, the "eternal decrees" have not yet taken their departure; by the touch of Benevolence, they have lost indeed their *cruelty*, but not their *absoluteness*; and something else is needed, ere we meet the presence of him to whom arose the night-cry of Gethsemane.

The reaction naturally came from the other end of the relation between us and God. As, in the *Religion of Causation*, Man seemed to be crushed into a mere creature, so was it on his behalf that remonstrance broke forth, and, at the bidding of Channing, the *Religion of Conscience* sprang to its feet. However fascinating the precision and simplicity of the Necessarian theory in its advance through the fields of physical and biological law, it meets with vehement resistance in its attempt to annex human nature, and put it under the same code with the tides and trees and reptiles. Our personality, though frightened and dwindled for a moment and hardly believing its own voice, is sure to recover from the most ingenious philosophy, and to re-assert its power over the alternatives before it, and own

its obligation to the authority within it; and the second period of our theology is marked by this recovered sense of Moral Freedom. When the tones of the New-England prophet reached us here, why did they so stir our hearts? They brought a new language; they burst into a forgotten chamber of the soul; they recalled natural faiths which had been explained away, and boldly appealed to feelings which had been struck down; they touched the springs of a sleeping enthusiasm, and carried us forward from the outer temple of devout science to the inner shrine of self-denying Duty. The very inspiration of the new Gospel, in what thought does it lie? *The greatness of human capacity*, not so much for intellectual training, as for voluntary righteousness, for victory over temptation, for resemblance to God; a greatness attested, on the terrible side, by the power to incur *guilt*, to choose ruin, to resist the Supreme Will. The interval between our lowest possible sin and our highest possible holiness is infinite, and can be expressed by no physical contrast of hell and heaven; and that interval measures the range of our power and the solemnity of our trust. Of this vast scale of possibility we have notice given to us in the aspirations and the remorse of conscience; whence we well know that our sins are more than mistakes and our self-conquests more than prudence; that both are our own, and we are shaped into neither; that by the one we sink into mere nature, by the other we rise towards God. Thus regarded, moral distinctions, no longer resolved into mere sentient ones, are reinstated in their independent reality, and the apprehension of them becomes the supreme dignity of all minds. There is one and the same righteousness for the whole hierarchy of spiritual natures, and the free love of it and life in it is the bond of their glorious commonwealth. Here it is that Man is truly "the *image* of God," and not his moulded *creature* merely. In proportion as he attains goodness, purity, disinterested love, and strength to negative the wrong, does he really reflect the Divine lineaments in little, and enter upon an

actual sympathy with the Holiest of all; and the essential perfection of the Parent-Mind repeats itself in the child, and kindles his features with a lustre of the heavens. Under the light of this faith, the history of mankind is no longer a mere branch of the physical development of the world, the last chapter in the natural history of species; but broadly distinguishes itself from these, and appears on a different stage as a drama of real probation; whose great criminals, tyrants and impostors, we are not bound to pity like the sufferers of loathsome disease in an infirmary, but may abhor and denounce as enemies rather than victims of God; and whose heroes and saints we may regard as something more than animated figures handsomely constituted and finely tempered for their work, and visit with our natural praise and reverence, as faithful representatives in time of the Eternal justice and purity. If you gaze down upon the human race from the Causal throne of the universe, they are flung into insignificance and float as gleaming dust upon the air-current. But if from the interior of the human spirit you look up to the heaven of God, you find a possible divineness in man, and an affinity with the Original perfection, which dissipates the illusion of his littleness. Will then this sense of moral freedom, of the reality and greatness of our trust, turn us into Stoics, and set us up in self-gratulation and pride? We are told that so it must be, if we, as free persons, stand face to face with the Personal Unity of the Father who constitutes us his children; and that we can have no humility, unless there be an eternal Son of God in heaven, to graft that grace upon us as a portion of his own!* If we ask for a reason for this strange dictum, we are only told that it is impossible for a finite personality to be humble out of its own resources and reflections: the feeling must be divinely given. Who then is it that is said to make us partners in this lowly grace? The Eternal and spotless Son of God!

* Tracts for Priests and People, No. XIV., The Incarnation, by Richard H. Hutton, M.A., pp. 27-30.

Is then humility possible in an Infinite personality, in One who stands only in presence of equal or of lower beings, and in whom failure has never been and progress never can be; yet *not* possible to us in our finite strife and imperfection, who are for ever haunted by the ideal which we do not reach, who see an indefinite hierarchy of excellence above us, and who, in all our short-comings, have day by day to spread our moral record before the Holiest of all? Surely, if there be a position and a mind in this universe, shut up within the tenderest shadows of humility, it is ours; and if it be true, as our critic affirms, that we, Unitarians, feel not these shadows, but lift a self-righteous head, may God give us better knowledge where we stand!

If now we put together the two types of doctrine which I have described, and make them into one, so far as they are compatible, shall we find rest in a complete and adequate theology? Let us say, from the first, that God is Sole Cause in the natural world; and from the second, that he is Sole Cause except ourselves in the moral world, where we are permitted to be "fellow-workers" with him: is this a finished account of his relation to us? No. All this might be true: he might pervade all nature with his Presence and his Providence: he might invest our spirit with a share of his Freewill: and might then withdraw from our voluntary life, and leave us to work out our moral problem alone, and only in the end return to take account of our fidelity. In this case, each soul would be as a spiritual island planted out in the natural deep of things, beaten by the tides of Law that sweep around, but with autocratic power to turn their destructive force aside, and make them serve its affluence and beauty. We should thus sustain real responsible relations to the heavenly Father, relations which he has planted us out to assume, and which he will recall us to sum up:—but, meanwhile, we should remain personally apart, and live as sons in a foreign land, executing the sacred trust they have brought from home. Is then our spiritual nature thus rounded off into self-sufficient isolation? and is it

across a chasm without a bridge that we look to him, and feel after him in vain to find him? When we too are on the eve of our cross-bearing, and take up the words, "I am not alone, for the Father is with me," is it only of a *physical presence* that we speak, and must we faint and struggle on through the silence of our God? Many a path of life such moral desolation would turn indeed into a dolorous way; nor could there well be a more pathetic lot than to believe in a Father of our spirits and to think him out of reach. But what is to fasten upon us so miserable a dream? Is it the night-mare of Law that sits upon our breast, and turns our cry for him into a helpless shriek? We have but to open our eyes, and the ghost is gone, and we draw breath in the sweet morning light. Law reigns inflexibly through the natural life, and, if that were all, would reign inflexibly everywhere. But there is in us that which is above the natural life, and apprehends what lies beyond it; and just as God is not imprisoned in the universe, but transcends it, and in that outlying realm is hindered by no pledge from acting freely out of fresh affections, so have we a range of free ideal life, whence we can look down upon the instincts of nature and up to the infinite Holiness, and which we know is in subjection to nothing inflexible. This is precisely what we mean by *Spirit*,—this liberty to move alternatively out of the thought and love of a reasonable mind; God is a Spirit, in so far as he is not locked up in the invariable order of the world: and there is a spirit in Man, in so far as he is not disposed of by his organism and his dwelling-place, but rises in thought and directs himself in affection to what is above them. Here then it is that there is room for true communion,—that Spirit may meet Spirit, and that the sacred silence may itself speak the exchange of love. Our moral ideals, the irrepressible sigh after higher perfection, the sense of Divine authority in every vision of the better, the shame at every yielding to the worse, these, we are well aware, are not of our making, or donations of other men; they are *above us;* they are *given to us;*

they are what draw us to God, and commence our likeness to him. In this field of spiritual affection that lies around our will, the common essence of man and God, the divine element that spreads its margin into us, has its home, its life, its reciprocal recognition; its bursts of human prayer, its answer of Divine compassion; its deep shadows of contrition, and returning gleams of restoration. The life with God then, of which saintly men in every age have testified, is no illusion of enthusiasm, but an ascent, through simple surrender, to the higher region of the soul, the very watch-tower whence there is the clearest and the largest view. The bridge is thus complete between the Divine and the human personality; and we crown the religion of *Causation*, and the religion of *Conscience*, by the religion of the *Spirit*. If we, in our poverty of thought, have had to take them up successively, all of them together have the authority of him, "in whom all fulness dwells," and can never be wanting in us except as we fail of "the full stature of Christ." We know with what meaning the lily of the field looked up into his eye; and if the robe of beauty on the earth was to him no dead product of the seasonal machine, but woven by the living hand of God, he sanctioned the piety which resolved the creative agencies back into the Creator's. We know with what strong crying and tears he could expostulate with heaven, and wrestle, as it were, will with will, in the hour of temptation and of agony, yet, as a Son, learn obedience through that which he suffered, and end with the calm words, "Not my will, but Thine, be done;" and, alike in the strife and in the surrender, we have his witness to the reality of that Moral conflict in which Sin is always possible, and filial self-sacrifice is the only victory. We know how he fed the secret springs of his gentle and holy life, and sought upon the hills and in the night for the loneliest confidences with the Hearer of Prayer, and with mingling confines of personality, felt himself in the Father and the Father in him and his: and we must own in him the supreme witness to the spiritual union of man with God;

—a union, which, were it constant as in him, might be deemed an Incarnation; but, where transient and intermittent, as with our lower fidelity, appears rather as a dispensation of the Spirit.

Thus then the Unitarian protest, which perhaps began with too great and monarchial a separation of our world from heaven, comes round at last to a re-union of the human and Divine. And in the cycle which it has run there is a curious recovery, as it were, of the functions of Trinity without its paradoxes, only with the drama transferred from the individuality of Christ to the life of humanity. We have traversed, and at length united, the relations of *creature to the Creator*, of *Son to Father*, of *weak and tempted to the all-quickening Spirit;* and may we not say that thus, without confusing the nature of God, we have enriched and ennobled our religious comprehension of Man, and provided for a more balanced justice to the claims of Nature, of Conscience, and of the Soul, and a blending consecration for them all! If an expanding faith brings us, as we think, an ampler peace, let it stir us also to a deeper fidelity; and if those who know us not still drive us from the sacred enclosure and treat us as wanderers from the Christendom we love, all the more let us fling ourselves into the embrace of the Only True, and still say, "Doubtless Thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer: thy name is from everlasting."

MIND IN NATURE

AND

INTUITION IN MAN.

MIND IN NATURE AND INTUITION IN MAN.

A LECTURE.

"Behold, there went forth a Sower to sow."—MARK iv. 3.

THAT the universe which we see around us was not always there, is so little disputed, that every philosophy and every faith undertakes to tell how it came to be. They all assume, as the theatre of their problem, the field of space where all objects lie, and the track of time where events have reached the Now. But into these they carry, to aid them in representing the origin of things, such interpreting conceptions as may be most familiar to the knowledge or fancy of their age: first, the *fiat of Almighty Will*, which bade the void be filled, so that the light kindled, and the water swayed, and the earth stood fast beneath the vault of sky; next, when the sway of poetry and force had yielded to the inventive arts, the idea of a *contriving and adapting power*, building and balancing the worlds to go smoothly and keep time together, and stocking them with self-moving and sensitive machines; and now, since physiology has got to the front, the analogy of *the seed or germ*, in itself the least of things, yet so prolific that, with history long enough, it will be as spawn upon the waters, and fill every waste with the creatures as they are. The prevalence of this newest metaphor betrays itself in the current language of science: we now "*unfold*" what we used to "*take to pieces;*" we "*develop*" the theory which we used to "*construct;*" we treat the system of the world as an "*organism*" rather

than a "*mechanism;*" we search each of its members to see, not what it is *for*, but what it is *from;* and the doctrine of *Evolution* only applies the image of indefinite growth of the greater out of the less, till from some datum invisible to the miscroscope arises a teeming universe.

In dealing with these three conceptions,—of *Creation, Construction, Evolution,*—there is one thing on which Religion insists, viz., that *Mind is first, and rules for ever;* and, the process whatever it be, is *its* process, moving towards congenial ends. Let this be granted, and it matters not by what path of method the Divine Thought advances, or how long it is upon the road. Whether it flashes into realization, like lightning out of Night; or fabricates, like a Demiurge, through a producing season, and then beholds the perfect work; or is for ever thinking into life the thoughts of beauty and the love of good; whether it calls its materials out of nothing, or finds them ready, and disposes of them from without; or throws them around as its own manifestation, and from within shapes its own purpose into blossom,—makes no difference that can be fatal to human piety. Time counts for nothing with the Eternal; and though it should appear that the system of the world and the ranks of being arose, not by a start of crystallization, but, like the grass of the forest, by silent and seasonal gradations, as true a worship may be paid to the indwelling God who makes matter itself transparent with spiritual meanings, and breathes before us in the pulses of nature, and appeals to us in the sorrows of men, as to the pre-existing Deity who, from an infinite loneliness, suddenly became the Maker of all. Nay, if the poet always looks upon the world through a suppliant eye, craving to meet his own ideal and commune with it alive; if prayer is ever a "feeling after him to find him," the fervour and the joy of both must be best sustained, if they are conscious not only of the stillness of his presence, but of the movement of his thought, and never quit the date of his creative moments. In the idea, therefore, of a

gradual unfolding of the creative plan, and the maturing of it by rules of growth, there is nothing necessarily prejudicial to piety; and so long as the Divine Mind is left in undisturbed supremacy, as the living All in all, the belief may even foster a larger, calmer, tenderer devotion, than the conceptions which it supersedes. But it is liable to a special illusion, which the others by their coarsely separating lines manage to escape. Taking all the causation of the world into the interior, instead of setting it to operate from without, it seems to dispense with God, and to lodge the power of indefinite development in the first seeds of things; and the apprehension seizes us, that as the oak will raise itself when the acorn and the elements are given, so from its germs might the universe emerge, though nothing Divine were there. The seeds no doubt were on the field; but who can say whether ever "a Sower went forth to sow?" So long as you plant the Supreme Cause at a distance from his own effects, and assign to him a space or a time where nothing else can be, the conception of that separate and solitary existence, however barren, is secure. But in proportion as you think of him as never in an empty field, waiting for a future beginning of activity as you let him mingle with the elements and blend with the natural life of things, there is a seeming danger lest his light should disappear behind the opaque material veil, and his Spirit be quenched amid the shadows of inexorable Law. This danger haunts our time. The doctrine of Evolution, setting itself to show how the greatest things may be brought out of the least, fills us with fear whether perhaps Mind may not be last instead of first, the hatched and full-fledged form of the protoplasmic egg; whether at the outset any thing was there but the raw rudiments of matter and force; whether the hierarchy of organized beings is not due to progressive differentiation of structure, and resolvable into splitting and agglutination of cells; whether the Intellect of man is more than blind instinct grown self-conscious, and shaping its beliefs by defining its

own shadows; whether the Moral sense is not simply a trained acceptance of rules worked out by human interests, an inherited record of the utilities; so that Design in Nature, Security in the Intuitions of Reason, Divine Obligation in the law of Conscience, may all be an illusory semblance, a glory from the later and ideal days thrown back upon the beginning, as a golden sunset flings its light across the sky, and, as it sinks, dresses up the East again with borrowed splendour.

This doubt, which besets the whole intellectual religion of our time, assumes that we must *measure every nature in its beginnings;* admit nothing to belong to its essence except what is found in it then; and deny its reports of itself, so far as they depart from that original standard. It takes two forms, according as the doctrine of Evolution is applied to Man himself, or to the outward universe. In the former case, it infuses distrust into our self-knowledge, weakens our subjective religion or native faith in the intuitions of thought and conscience, and tempts us to imagine that the higher they are, the further are they from any assured solidity of base. In the latter case, it weakens our objective religion, suggests that there is no originating Mind, and that the divine look of the world is but the latest phase of its finished surface, instead of the incandescence of its inmost heart. Let us first glance at the theory of HUMAN evolution, and the moral illusions it is apt to foster.

I. Under the name of the "Experience Philosophy," this theory has long been applied to the *mind of the individual;* and has produced not a few admirable analyses of the formation of language and the tissue of thought; nor is there any legitimate objection to it, except so far as its simplifications are overstrained and cannot be made good. It undertakes, with a minimum of initial capacity, to account for the maximum of human genius and character: give it only the sensible pleasures and pains, the spontaneous muscular activity, and the law by which associated

mental phenomena cling together; and out of these elements it will weave before your eyes the whole texture of the perfect inner life, be it the patterned story of imagination, the delicate web of the affections, or the seamless robe of moral purity. The outfit is that of the animal; the product but "a little lower than the angel." All the higher endowments,—our apprehension of truth, our consciousness of duty, our self-sacrificing pity, our religious reverence,—are in this view merely transformed sensations; the disinterested impulses are refinements spun out of the coarse fibre of self-love; the subtlest intellectual ideas are but elaborated perceptions of sight or touch; and the sense of Right, only interest or fear under a disguise. If this be so, how will the discovery affect our natural trust in the intimations of our supreme faculties? Does it not discharge as dreams their most assured revelations? By intuition of Reason we believe in the Law of Causality, in the infinitude of Space, in the relations of Number, in the reality of an outside world, in all the fundamental conceptions of Science; but here are they, one and all, recalled to the standard of Sense, which they seem to transcend, and emptied of any meaning beyond. By vision of Imagination we see an ideal beauty enfolding many a person and many a scene, and appealing to us as a pathetic light gleaming from within; but here we find it all resolved into curvature of lines and adjustments of colour. By inspiration of Conscience we learn that our sin is the defiance of a Divine authority, and, though hid from every human eye, drives us into a wilderness of Exile,—for "the wicked fleeth, though no man pursueth;" but here we are told that the ultimate elements of good and evil are our own pleasures and pains, from which the moral sanction selects as its specialty the approbation and disapprobation of our fellow-men. Thus all the independent values which our higher faculties had claimed for their natural affections and beliefs are dissipated as fallacious; they are all based upon a *sentient measure* of worth which lies at the bottom; they are like paper money,

refined contrivances representative of the ultimate gold of pleasure, but, where not interchangeable with this, intrinsically worthless. And so the feeling almost inevitably spreads, that we are dupes of our own characteristic capacities; that the loftier air into which they lift us is a tinted and distorting medium, and shows us glories that are not there; that the idea of an eternal Fount of beauty, truth and goodness, behind the pleasingness and concinnity of phenomena, is an illusion; and that the tendency, irresistible as it is, to cling to this idea as something higher than its denial, is but a part of the romance. Is this scepticism imaginary? Let any one, in studying the modern writers of this school, compare the solid, manly, sensible way in which they deal with every thing on the physiological and sensational level, with their manner towards all the convictions and sentiments usually recognized as the supreme lights of our nature; the tone now of forbearing indulgence, now of sickly appreciation, often of hardly concealed contempt, that is heard beneath the interminable conjectural analyses of Moral and Religious affections, — and he will feel the difference between the honour that is paid to truth, and the constrained patience towards what other men revere.

By a recent extension, the theory of Evolution has been applied to the whole natural history of our race; and the resources of *Habit*, already serviceable in explaining the aptitudes of individuals, have been turned to account on the larger scale of successive generations, transmitting by inheritance the acquisitions hitherto made good. In the training of a nature, the world thus becomes a permanent school, the interruption of death is virtually abolished, and life is laid open to continuous progress. By this immense gain of power, it is supposed, all the differences which separate Man from other animals may be accounted for as gradual attainments; and many an intuition of the mind, too immediate and self-evident to be a product of personal experience, may yield to analysis as a more protracted

growth, and stand as the compend of ages of gathering feeling and condensing thought. Among creatures that herd together for common safety, each one learns to read the looks of anger or of good-will in its neighbours, and discovers what it is that brings upon him the one or the other; and insensibly he forms to himself a rule for avoiding the displeasure and conciliating the favour in which he has so large an interest. This rudimentary experience imprints and records itself in the nervous organization, and descends to ulterior generations as an original and instinctive recoil from what offends and impulse towards what gratifies the feeling of the tribe: so that the lesson need not be gone over again; but the offspring, taking up his education where the parent left off, accumulates his feeling, quickens his mental execution, and hands down fresh contributions to what at last emerges as a Moral Sense. In this way, it is contended, the Conscience is a hoarded fund of traditionary pressures of utility, gradually effacing the primitive vestiges of fear, and dispensing itself with an affluence of disinterested sympathy. And the religious consciousness that visits the soul in its remorse, of an invisible Witness and Judge who condemns the sin, comes, we are told, from the deification of public opinion, or the fancy that some dead hero's ghost still watches over the conduct of his clan.

This vast enlargement of the doctrine of Evolution, while increasing its power, and removing it from the reach of accurate tests, alters neither its principle nor its practical effect. It undertakes to exhibit the highest and the greatest in our nature as ulterior phenomena of the lowest and the least. And it usually treats as a superstition our natural reverence for the rational, moral, and religious intuitions as sources of independent insight and ultimate authority; and, in order to estimate them, translates them back into short-hand expressions of sensible experience and social utility. Nor can we wonder at this scepticism. If the only reality at bottom of the sense of duty is fear and

submission to opinion, whatever it carries in it that transcends this ground, and persuades us of an Obligation in which fear and opinion have no voice, is an ideal addition got up within us by causes which produce in us all sorts of psychological figments. If the only facts that lie in our idea of Space are a set of feelings in the muscles and the skin and the eye, then whatever beliefs it involves which these cannot verify are naturally discredited, and treated as curiosities of artificial manufacture. If our human characteristics are throughout the developed instincts of the brute, differing only in degree, then the moment they present us with intuitions which are distinct *in kind*, they begin to play us false; and those who see through the cheat naturally warn us against them. And so we are constantly told that our highest attributes are only the lower that have lost their memory, and mistake themselves for something else.

It is not my present intention to call in question either of these varieties of evolution. Inadequate as the evidence of them both appears to be, I will suppose their case to be made out: and still, I submit, it does not justify the sceptical estimate which it habitually fosters of the intellectual, moral, and religious intuitions of the human mind. For,

(1) Though animal sensation, with its connected instinct, should be the raw material of our whole mental history, it is not on that account entitled *to measure all that comes after it*, and stand as the boundary-line between fact and dream, between terra firma and "airy nothing." That which is first in Time has no necessary priority of rank in the scale of truth and reality; and the later-found may well be the greater existence and the more assured. If it is a development of Faculty, and not of incapacity, which the theory provides, the process must advance us into new light, and not withdraw us from clearer light behind: and we have reason to confide in the freshest gleams and inmost visions of to-day, and to discard whatever quenches and confuses them in the vague and turbid beginnings of the

Past. With what plea will you exhort me, "If you would rid yourself of intellectual mysteries, come with us, and see the stuff your thought is made of: if you would stand free of ideal illusions, count with us the medullary waves that have run together into the flood-tide of what you call your conscience: if you would shake off superstition, look at the way in which the image of dead men will hang about the fancy of a savage, or the personification of an abstract quality imposes on the ignorance of simple times"? Is our wisdom to be gathered by going back to the age before our errors? And instead of consulting the maturity of thought, are we to peer into its cradle and seek oracles in its infant cries? If the last appeal be to the animal elements of experience, we can learn only by unlearning; and by shutting one after another of the hundred ideal eyes of the finished intellect, we shall have a chance of seeing and feeling things as they are. If nothing is to be deemed true but what the pre-human apes saw, then all the sciences must be illusory; with the suicidal result that, with them, this doctrine of Evolution must vanish too. Or if, stopping short of this extreme distrust of the acquired intuitions, you make a reservation in favour of the new visions of the intellect, what right can you show for discharging those of the conscience? The tacit assumption therefore that you upset a super-sensual belief, by tracing the history of its emergence among sensible conditions, is a groundless prejudice.

(2) Further, the question to be determined may be presented as a problem in physiology, to be resolved by corresponding rules: What is the *function* of certain parts of our human constitution, viz., the Reason and the Moral Faculty? Now it is a recognized principle that, in estimating function, you must study the organ, not in its rudimentary condition, before it has disengaged itself from adjacent admixtures and flung off the foreign elements, but in its perfect or differentiated state, so as to do its own work and nothing else. In order to give the idea of a timepiece to

one who had it not, you would not send him to one of the curious medieval clocks which could play a tune, and fire a gun, and announce the sunrise, and mark the tides, and report twenty miscellaneous things besides; but to the modern chronometer, simple and complete, that, telling only the moment, tells it perfectly. And in natural organizations, to learn the capabilities and project of any structure, you would not resort to the embryo where it is forming but not working: you would wait till it was born into the full presence of the elements with which it had to deal; not till then could you see how they played upon it, and what was its response to them. In conformity with this rule, whither would you betake yourself, if you wanted to measure the intrinsic competency of our intellectual faculty, and determine what its very nature gives it to know? Would you take counsel of the nurse who held you "when you first opened your eyes to the light,"* or otherwise study "the first consciousness in any infant," "before the time when memory commences,"† and disregard every thing "subsequent to the first beginnings of intellectual life"? ‡ On the contrary, you would avoid that soft inchoate promise of nature, only nominally born, where the very structures of its finer work have not yet set into their distinctive consistence and form; and would hold your peace till the faculty is awake and on its feet, and can clearly tell you what it sees for itself, and what it makes out at second-hand: just as, to gauge the lunar light, you must have patience while the thin crescent grows, and wait till the full orb is there. Still less can you take the report of the Moral Faculty from the confessions of the cradle, or from the quarrels and affections of the apes; the conditions being not yet present for the bare conception of a moral problem. The most that can be asked of an intuition is, that it shall keep pace with the cases as they arise, and be on the spot when it is wanted; and if you would know what provision our nature holds for

* Mill's Examination of Hamilton, 3rd ed. p. 172.

† Ibid. ‡ Ibid. p. 160.

dealing with its Duty and interpreting its guilt, you must go into the thick of its moral life, and bid it tell you what it sees from the swaying tides of temptation and of victory. The "purity" of intuitions is not "pristine," but ultimate; cleared at length from accidental and irrelevant dilutions, and with essence definitely crystallized, they realize and exhibit the idea that lay at the heart of all their tentatives, and constitutes their truth. Am I told that it is hopeless at so late an hour to separate what is an indigenous gift from what is implanted by education? I reply, it no doubt requires, but it will not baffle, the hand of skilled analysis; it is a difficulty which, in other cases, we find it not impossible to overcome; for there are assuredly instincts and affections, strictly original and natural, that make no sign and play no part till our maturer years, yet which are readily distinguished from the products of artificial culture.

If, to find the functions of our higher faculties, we must look to their last stage, and not to their first, we at once recover and justify the ideal conceptions which the expositors of Evolution are accustomed to disparage as romance. For among these functions are present certain Intuitive beliefs;—for the Reason, in Divine Causality; for the Conscience, in Divine Authority; together blending into the knowledge of a Supreme and Holy Mind. These august apprehensions, we are entitled to declare, are not the illusions, but the discoveries of Man; who, by rising into them, is borne into more of the Universe of things than any other being upon earth, and is made conscious of its transcendent and ultimate realities. If these trusts are indeed the growth of ages, from seeds invisibly dropped upon the field of time, be it so; it was not without hand; there was *a Sower* that went forth to sow.

II. We turn now to the Second Form of doubt raised by the doctrine of Evolution: under which it weakens our objective trust in an originating Mind.

A naturalist who to his own satisfaction has traced the pedigree of the human intellect, conscience, and religion,

to Ascidian skin-bags sticking to the sea-side rocks, is not likely to arrest the genealogy there, at a stage so little fitted to serve as a starting-point of derivative being. Or, if his own retreat should go no further, others will take up the regressive race, and, soon passing the near and easy line into the vegetable kingdom, will work through its provinces to its lichen-spotted edge: and, after perhaps one shrinking look, will dare the leap into the dead realm beyond, and bring home the parentage of all to the primitive elements of "matter and force." To give effect to this extension over the universe at large of the theory of Evolution, the scientific imagination of our day has long been meditating its projected book of Genesis, and has already thrown out its special chapters here and there; and though the scenes of the drama as a whole are not yet arranged, the general plan is clear: that the Lucretian method is the true one; that nothing arises for a purpose, but only from a power; that no Divine Actor therefore is required, but only atoms extended, resisting, shaped, with spheres of mutual attraction and repulsion; that, with these *minima* to begin with, a growth will follow of itself by which the *maxima* will be reached; and that thus far the chief and latest thing it has done is the apparition of Mind in the human race and civilization in human society, conferring upon man the melancholy privilege of being, so far as he knows, at the summit of the universe.

The main support of this doctrine is found in two arguments, supplied respectively by physical science and by natural history; each of which we will pass under review.

i. The former relies on the new scientific conception of the *Unity of Force*. When Newton established the composition of Light in his treatise on Optics, and the law of Gravitation in his Principia, he conceived himself to be treating of two separate powers of nature, between which, quick as he was to seize unexpected relations, he dreamt of no interchange. Yet now it is understood that when collisions occur of bodies gravitating on opposite lines, the

momenta that seemed to be killed simply burst into light and heat. When Priestley's experiments detected the most important chemical element on the one hand, and the fundamental electrical laws on the other, he seemed to move on paths of research that had no contact. Yet, in the next generation, chemical compounds were resolved by electricity; which again turns up in exchange for magnetism, and can pass into motion, heat, and light. To see the transmigration of natural agency, trace only through a few of its links the effect of sunshine on the tropic seas. So far as it warms the mass of waters, either directly or through the scorched shores that they wash, it stirs them into shifting layers and currents, and creates *mechanical* power. But it also removes the superficial film; and thus far spends itself, not in raising the temperature, but in changing the form from liquid to vapour, and so altering the specific gravity as to transfer what was on the deep to the level of the mountain-tops. It is the Pacific that climbs and crowns the Andes, resuming on the way the liquid state in the shape of clouds, and as it settles crystallizing into solid snow and ice. The original set of solar rays have now played their part, and made their escape elsewhere. But there is sunshine among the glaciers too, which soon begins to resolve the knot that has been tied, and restore what has been stolen. It sets free the waters that have been locked up, and lets their gravitation have its play upon their flow. As they dash through ravines, or linger in the plains, they steal into the roots of grass and tree, and by the tribute which they leave pass into the new shape of *vital* force. And if they pass the homesteads of industry, and raise the food of a civilized people, who can deny that they contribute not only to the organic, but to the *mental* life, and so have run the whole circuit from the lowest to the highest phase of power? That the return back may be traced from the highest to the lowest, is shown by every effort of thought and will; which throngh the medium of nervous energy in one direction sets in action the levers of the limbs, and in

another works the laboratory of the organic life, and forms new chemical compounds, of which some are reserved for use, while others pass into the air as waste. Still further: all doubt of identity in the force which masks itself in these various shapes is said to be removed by the test of direct measurement before and after the change. The heating of a pound of water by one degree has its exact mechanical equivalent;* and a given store of elevated temperature will overcome the same weights, whether applied directly to lift them, or turned first into a thermo-electric current, so as to perform its task by deputy.† The inference drawn from the phenomena of which these are samples is no less than this: that each kind of force is convertible into any other, and undergoes neither gain nor loss upon the way; so that the sum-total remains for ever the same, and is only differently represented as the proportions change amongst the different forms of life, and between the organic and the inorganic realms. Hence arises the argument that, in having *any* force, you have virtually *all;* and that, assuming only material atoms as depositories of mechanical resistance and momentum, you can supply a universe with an exhaustive cosmogony, and dispense with the presence of Mind, except as one of its phenomena.

To test this argument, let us grant the data which are demanded, and imagine the primordial space charged with matter, in molecules or in masses, in motion or rest, as you may prefer. Put it under the law of gravitation, and invest it with what varieties you please of density and form. Thus constituted, it perfectly fulfils all the conditions you have asked; it presses, it moves, it propagates and distributes impulse, is liable to acceleration and retardation, and exhibits all the phenomena with which any treatise on Mechanics can properly deal. In order, however, to keep the problem clear within its limits, let us have it in the

* Viz., the fall of 772 lbs. through a foot. *See* Mr. Joule's Experiments in "Grove's Correlation of Physical Forces," p. 34, 5th ed.

† *See* "Grove's Correlation, p. 255, 5th ed.

simplest form, and conceive the atoms to be all of *gold;* then, I would fain learn by what step the hypothesis proposes to effect its passage to the *chemical* forces and their innumerable results. *Heat* it may manage to reach by the friction and compression of the materials at its disposal; and its metal universe may thus have its solid, liquid, and gaseous provinces; but, beyond these varieties, its homogeneous particles cannot advance the history one hair's breadth through an eternity. It is not true, then, that the conditions which give the first type of force suffice to promote it to the second; and in order to start the world on its chemical career, you must enlarge its capital and present it with an outfit of *heterogeneous* constituents. Try, therefore, the effect of such a gift; fling into the pre-existing caldron the whole list of recognized elementary substances, and give leave to their affinities to work: we immediately gain an immense accession to our materials for the architecture and resources for the changes of the world,—the water and the air, the salts of the ocean, and the earthy or rocky compounds that compose the crust of the globe, and the variable states of magnetism and heat, which throw the combinations into slow though constant change. But with all your enlargement of data, turn them as you will, at the end of every passage which they explore, the *door of life* is closed against them still; and though more than once it has been proclaimed that a way has been found through, it has proved that the living thing was on the wrong side to begin with. It is not true, therefore, that, from the two earlier stages of force, the ascent can be made to the vital level; the ethereal fire yet remains in Heaven; and philosophy has not stretched forth the Promethean arm that can bring it down. And if, once more, we make you a present of this third phase of power, and place at your disposal all that is contained beneath and within the flora of the world, still your problem is no easier than before; you cannot take a single step towards the deduction of sensation and thought: neither at the upper

limit do the highest plants (the exogens) transcend themselves and overbalance into animal existence; nor at the lower, grope as you may among the sea-weeds and sponges, can you persuade the sporules of the one to develop into the other. It is again not true, therefore, that, in virtue of the convertibility of force, the possession of any is the possession of the whole: we give you all the forms but one; and that one looks calmly down on your busy evolutions, and remains inaccessible. Is, then, the transmigration of forces altogether an illusion? By no means; but before one can exchange with another, *both must be there;* and to turn their equivalence into a universal formula, *all* must be there. With only one kind of elementary matter, there can be no chemistry; with only the chemical elements and their laws, no life; with only vital resources, as in the vegetable world, no beginning of mind. But let Thought and Will with their conditions once be there, and they will appropriate vital power; as life, once in possession, will ply the alembics and the test-tubes of its organic laboratory; and chemical affinity is no sooner on the field than it plays its game among the cohesions of simple gravitation. Hence it is impossible to work the theory of Evolution upwards from the bottom. If all force is to be conceived as One, its type must be looked for in the highest and all-comprehending term; and Mind must be conceived as there, and as divesting itself of some specialty at each step of its descent to a lower stratum of law, till represented at the base under the guise of simple Dynamics. Or, if you retain the forces in their plurality, then you must *assume* them *all* among your data, and confess, with one of the greatest living expositors of the phenomena of Development, that unless among your primordial elements you scatter already the germs of mind as well as the inferior elements, the Evolution can never be wrought out.* But surely a theory, which is content simply to assume in the germ whatever it

* "Lotze's Mikrokosmus," B. iv. Kap. 2, Band ii. 33, seqq.

has to turn out full-grown, throws no very brilliant light on the genesis of the Universe.

ii. The second and principal support of the doctrine under review is found in the realm of natural history, and in that province of it which is occupied by *living beings*. Here, it is said, in the field of observation nearest to us, we have evidence of a power in each nature to push itself and gain ground, as against all natures less favourably constituted. There is left open to it a certain range of possible variations from the type of its present individuals, of which it may avail itself in any direction that may fortify its position; and even if its own instincts did not seize at once the line of greatest strength, still, out of its several tentatives, all the feeble results would fail to win a footing, and only the residuary successes would make good their ground. The ill-equipped troops of rival possibilities being always routed, however often they return, the well-armed alone are seen upon the field, and the world is in possession of "the fittest to live." We thus obtain a principle of self-adjusting adaptation of each being to its condition, without resorting to a designing care disposing of it from without; and its development is an experimental escape from past weakness, not a pre-conceived aim at a future perfection.

I have neither ability nor wish to criticize the particular indications of this law, drawn with an admirable patience and breadth of research from every department of animated nature. Though the logical structure of the proof does not seem to me particularly solid, and the disproportion between the evidence and the conclusion is of necessity so enormous as to carry us no further than the discussion of an hypothesis, yet, for our present purpose, the thesis may pass as if established; and our scrutiny may be directed only to its bearings, should it be true.

(1) The genius of a country which has been the birthplace and chief home of Political Economy is naturally pleased by a theory of this kind; which invests its favourite lord and master, *Competition*, with an imperial crown and

universal sway. But let us not deceive ourselves with mere abstract words and abbreviations, as if they could reform a world or even farm a sheep-walk. *Competition* is not, like a primitive function of nature, an independent and original power, which can of itself do any thing: the term only describes a certain intensifying of power already there; making the difference, under particular conditions, between function latent and function exercised. It may therefore turn the less into the more; and it is reasonable to attribute to it an *increment* to known and secured effects; but not new and unknown effects, for which else there is no provision. It gives but a partial and superficial account of the phenomena with which it has concern; of their degree; of their incidence here or there; of their occurrence now or then: of themselves in their characteristics it pre-supposes, and does not supply, the cause. To that cause, then, let us turn. Let us consider what must be upon the field, before competition can arise.

(2) It cannot act except in the presence of some *possibility of a better or worse.* A struggle out of relative disadvantage implies that a relative advantage is within grasp,—that there is a prize of promotion offered for the contest. The rivalry of beings eager for it is but an instrument for *making the best of things;* and only when flung into the midst of an indeterminate variety of alternative conditions can it find any scope. When it gets there and falls to work, what does it help us to account for? It accounts certainly for the triumph and *survivorship of the better,* but not for there *being a better to survive. Given,* the slow and the swift upon the same course, it makes it clear that the race will be to the swift; but it does not provide the fleeter feet by which the standard of speed is raised. Nay more; even for the prevalence of the better (" or fitter to live ") it would not account, except on the assumption that whatever is *better* is *stronger* too; and a universe in which this rule holds already indicates its divine constitution, and is pervaded by an ideal power

unapproached by the forces of necessity. Thus the law of "natural selection," instead of dispensing with anterior causation and enabling the animal races to be their own Providence and do all their own work, distinctly testifies to a constitution of the world pre-arranged for progress, externally spread with large choice of conditions, and with internal provisions for seizing and realizing the best. On such a world, rich in open possibilities of beauty, strength, affection, intellect, and character, they are planted and set free; charged with instincts eagerly urging them to secure the preferable line of each alternative; and disposing themselves, by the very conditions of equilibrium, into a natural hierarchy, in which the worthiest to live are in the ascendant, and the standard of life is for ever rising. What can look more like the field of a directing Will intent upon the good? Indeed, the doctrine of "natural selection" owes a large part of its verisimilitude to its skilful imitation of the conditions and method of Free-will;—the indeterminate varieties of possible movement; the presentation of these before a selective power; the determination of the problem by fitness for preference,—all these are features that would belong no less to the administration of a presiding Mind; and that, instead of resorting for the last solution to this high arbitrament, men of science should suppose it to be blindly fought out by the competing creatures, as if they were supreme, is one of the marvels which the professional intellect, whatever its department, more often exhibits than explains.

(3) But, before competition can arise, there must be besides the field of favourable possibility, *desire or instinct* to lay hold of its opportunities. Here it is that we touch the real dynamics of evolution, which rivalry can only bring to a somewhat higher pitch. Here, it must be admitted, there is at work a genuine principle of progression, the limits of which it is difficult to fix. Every being which is so far individuated as to be a separate centre of sensation, and of the balancing active sponta-

neity, is endowed with a self-asserting power, capable, on the field already supposed, of becoming a self-advancing power. Under its operation, there is no doubt, increasing differentiation of structure and refinement of function may be expected to emerge; nor is there any reason, except such as the facts of natural history may impose, why this process should be arrested at the boundaries of the species recognized in our present classifications. Possibly, if the slow increments of complexity in the organs of sentient beings on the globe were all mapped out before us, the whole teeming multitudes now peopling the land, the waters, and the air, might be seen radiating from a common centre in lines of various divergency, and, however remote their existing relations, might group themselves as one family. The speculative critic must here grant without stint all that the scheme of development can ask; and he must leave it to the naturalist and physiologist to break up the picture into sections, if they must. But then, *Why* must he grant it? Because here, having crossed the margin of animal life, we have, in its germ of feeling and idea, not merely a persistent, but a self-promoting force, able to turn to account whatever is below it; the mental power, even in its rudiments, dominating the vital, and constraining it to weave a finer organism; and, for that end, to amend its application of the chemical forces, and make them better economize their command of mechanical force. Observe, however, that, if here we meet with a truly fruitful agency, capable of accomplishing difficult feats of new combination and delicate equilibrium, we meet with it *here first;* and the moment we fall back from the line of sentient life, and quit the scene of this eager, aggressive, and competing power, we part company with all principle of progress; and consequently lose the tendency to that increasing complexity of structure and subtlety of combination which distinguish the organic from the inorganic compounds. Below the level of life, there is no room for the operation of "natural selection." Its place is there

occupied by another principle, for which no such wonders of constructive adaptation can be claimed;—I mean, the dynamic rule of *Action on the line of least resistance*,—a rule, the working of which is quite in the opposite direction. For evidently it goes against the establishment of unstable conditions of equilibrium, and must therefore be the enemy rather than the patron of the complex ingredients, the precarious tissues, and the multiplied relations, of sentient bodies; and on its own theatre must prevent the permanent formation of any but the simpler unions among the material elements. Accordingly, all the great enduring masses that form and fill the architecture of inorganic nature,—its limestone and clay, its oxides and salts, its water and air,—are compounds, or a mixture, of few and direct constituents. And the moment that life retreats and surrenders the organism it has built and held, the same antagonist principle enters on possession, and sets to work to destroy the intricate structure of "proximate principles" with their "compound radicals." With life and mind therefore there begins, whether by modified affinities or by removal of waste, a *tension* against these lower powers, carrying the being up to a greater or less height upon the wing; but with life it ends, leaving him then to the perpetual gravitation that completes the loftiest flight upon the ground. Within the limits of her Physics and Chemistry alone, Nature discloses no principle of progression, but only provisions for periodicity; and out of this realm, without further resources, she could never rise.

The downward tendency which sets in with any relaxation of the differentiating forces of life is evinced, not only in the extreme case of dissolution in death, but in the well-known relapse of organs which have been artificially developed into exceptional perfection back into their earlier state, when relieved of the strain and left to themselves. Under the tension of a directing mental interest, whether supplied by the animal's own instincts or by the controlling care of man, the organism yields itself to be moulded into

more special and highly finished forms; and a series of ascending variations withdraws the nature from its original or first-known type. But wherever we can lift the tension off, the too skilful balance proves unstable, and the law of reversion reinstates the simpler conditions. Only on the higher levels of life do we find a self-working principle of progression: and, till we reach them, development wants its dynamics; and, though there may be evolution, it cannot be self-evolution.

These considerations appear to me to break the back of this formidable argument in the middle; and to show the impossibility of dispensing with the presence of Mind in any scene of ascending being, where the little is becoming great, and the dead alive, and the shapeless beautiful, and the sentient moral, and the moral spiritual. Is it not in truth a strange choice, to set up "*Evolution*," of all things, as the negation of *Purpose* pre-disposing what is to come? For what does the word mean, and whence is it borrowed? It means, to unfold from within; and it is taken from the history of the seed or embryo of living natures. And what is the seed but a casket of pre-arranged futurities, with its whole contents *prospective*, settled to be what they are by reference to ends still in the distance. If a grain of wheat be folded in a mummy-cloth and put into a catacomb, its germ for growing and its albumen for feeding sleep side by side, and never find each other out. But no sooner does it drop thousands of years after, on the warm and moistened field, than their mutual play begins, and the plumule rises and lives upon its store till it is able to win its own maintenance from the ground. Not only are its two parts therefore relative to each other, but both are relative to conditions lying in another department of the world,—the clouds, the atmosphere, the soil; in the absence of which they remain barren and functionless:—and *this*, from a Cause that has no sense of relation! The human ear, moulded in the silent matrix of nature, is formed with a nerve susceptible to one influence alone, and that an

absent one, the undulations of a medium into which it is not yet born; and, in anticipation of the whole musical scale with all its harmonies, furnishes itself with a microscopic grand-piano of three thousand stretched strings, each ready to respond to a different and definite number of aërial vibrations:—and *this*, from a Cause that never meant to bring together the inner organ and the outer medium, now hidden from each other! The eye, shaped in the dark, selects an exclusive sensibility to movements propagated from distant skies; and so weaves its tissues, and disposes its contents, and hangs its curtains, and adjusts its range of motion, as to meet every exigency of refraction and dispersion of the untried light, and be ready to paint in its interior the whole perspective of the undreamed world without:—and *this*, from a Cause incapable of having an end in view! Surely, nothing can be evolved that is not first involved; and if there be any thing which not only carries a definite future in it, but has the whole *rationale* of its present constitution grounded in that future, it is the embryo, whence, by a strange humour, this denial of final causes has chosen to borrow its name. Not more certainly is the statue that has yet to be, already potentially contained in the preconception and sketches of the artist, than the stately tree of the next century in the beech-mast that drops upon the ground; or the whole class of Birds, if you give them a common descent, in the eggs to which you choose to go back as first; or the entire system of nature in any germinal cell or other prolific *minimum* whence you suppose its organism to have been brought out. Evolution and Prospection are inseparable conceptions. Go back as you will, and try to propel the movement from behind instead of drawing it from before, development in a definite direction towards the realization of a dominant scheme of ascending relations is the sway of an overruling end. To take away the ideal basis of nature, yet construe it by the analogy of organic growth, will be for ever felt as a contradiction. It is to put out the eyes of the Past, in order to

show us with what secure precision, amid distracting paths, and over chasms bridged by a hair, it selects its way into the Future.

If the Divine Idea will not retire at the bidding of our speculative science, but retains its place, it is natural to ask, what is its relation to the series of so-called Forces in the world? But the question is too large and deep to be answered here. Let it suffice to say, that there need not be any *overruling* of these forces by the will of God, so that the supernatural should disturb the natural; or any *supplementing* of them, so that he should fill up their deficiencies. Rather is his thought related to them as, in Man, the mental force is related to all below it; turning them all to account for ideal ends, and sustaining the higher equilibrium which else would lapse into lower forms. More truly, yet equivalently, might we say, these supposed forces, which are only our intellectual interpretation of classes of perceived phenomena, are but varieties of his Will, the rules and methods of his determinate and legislated agency, in which, to keep faith with the universe of beings, he abnegates all change; but beyond which, in his transcendent relations with dependent and responsible minds, he has left a glorious margin for the free spiritual life, open to the sacredness of Personal Communion, and the hope of growing similitude.

THE END.

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